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BETTY WOLD JOHNSON FOUNDATION PROVIDES \$1 MILLION GRANT TO ECAC LAUNCHING COLLEGE'S LARGEST WOMEN'S FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE

The partnership with the New York Jets funds groundbreaking league set to debut in Spring 2026

FLORHAM PARK, NJ (Dec. 2, 2025) – The Betty Wold Johnson Foundation today announced a groundbreaking \$1 million grant to the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) which will transform the landscape of women's flag football. This investment, directed by Woody Johnson, will fund the creation of the largest collegiate women's flag football league in the nation, launching in spring 2026. The initiative underscores the Johnson Family's and New York Jets unwavering commitment to expanding access and opportunity for women in the sport.

"Empowering young women through football has always been central to our mission," said Woody Johnson, Chairman of the New York Jets. "Partnering with the ECAC to launch this league creates a clear pathway for student-athletes to compete, grow, and lead—on the field and beyond."

Mr. Johnson continued, "The Jets ECAC Women's Flag Football League builds on the success of our high school girls' flag program, which opened doors for thousands of athletes across the region. Now, we're taking the next step: collegiate play, Olympic dreams, and a future professional league."

Gameplay will feature the 7-on-7 format of flag football. The season will kickoff with a Media Day at MetLife Stadium in February, followed by a USA Football Talent ID Camp the following day. Regular season games will be played February through April on campus sites, culminating in the championship game at MetLife Stadium¹ during the first weekend in May.

"The launch of the Jets ECAC Women's Flag Football League represents a significant milestone for women's sports," said Troy Vincent Sr., NFL Executive Vice President of Football Operations. "By establishing the largest collegiate women's flag football league, we are collectively building a future where young women can dream bigger and continue playing the sport they love in a competitive setting. Woody Johnson, the Johnson Family, and the New York Jets have been pioneers in this area, and we are proud to partner with them and the ECAC to empower the next generation of flag football athletes."

"The ECAC is thrilled to be partnering with the New York Jets and the Betty Wold Johnson Foundation to provide a premium intercollegiate flag football league for hundreds of young women athletes interested in pursuing their athletics dreams," said Dan Coonan, ECAC Commissioner. "We couldn't be happier to be selected for this partnership. With 88 years of experience sponsoring first-rate intercollegiate athletic competition, we believe we are uniquely suited to bring this bold initiative to life. Our sincere thanks to Woody Johnson, the Jets, and the Betty Wold Johnson Foundation for their transformative vision and generous commitment to advancing this emerging sport. We can't wait to get started."

As part of the Jets and BWJF commitment, each school will receive a grant to offset costs associated with fielding a flag football team. The following schools have committed to playing in the Jets ECAC Women's Flag Football League:

School Name	Location
Allegheny College	Meadville, PA
Caldwell University*	Caldwell, NJ
Dominican University*	Orangeburg, NY
Eastern University	St. Davids, PA
Fairleigh Dickinson*	Teaneck, NJ
Franciscan University	Steubenville, OH
Kean University	Union, NJ
Long Island University	Brooklyn, NY
Mercy University	Dobbs Ferry, NY
Mercyhurst University	Erie, PA
Montclair State University	Montclair, NJ
Mount St. Mary's University	Emmitsburg, MD
Union College*	Schenectady, NY
Penn State Schuylkill	Schuylkill Haven, PA
Sweet Briar College*	Sweet Briar, VA

To watch the announcement video and download graphics please click [here](#).

What They are Saying About the Jets & ECAC Women's Flag Football League:

Callie Brownson, New York Jets Flag Football Advisor: "This league is more than just games—it's about creating opportunities and building a future for women in football," said Callie Brownson, Jets Flag Football Advisor. "From high school programs to the collegiate level, we're opening doors that didn't exist before. The Betty Wold Johnson Foundation's support ensures that young women can compete at the highest level, develop as leaders, and see a clear pathway to their dreams."

Jesse Linder, New York Jets Vice President Community Relations: "It is amazing to see the evolution of girls flag football from 2011 to today," said Jets Vice President of Community Relations. "The New York Jets are proud to have played a role in this growth and can't wait to see where it goes from here. From high school sanctioning to elite club play to colligate flag football a pathway to the Olympics and professional flag football is being forged."

Amanda Ruller, Eastern University Head Flag Football Coach: "The investment of the Johnson family, Betty Wold Johnson Foundation and the New York Jets means they're putting real money, resources, influence and visibility into growing opportunities for girls and young women in flag football," said Amanda Ruller, head flag football coach at Eastern University. "There's so much visibility that the Jets are providing for the sport that we love and the community loves, and people love watching it."

Quincy Williams, New York Jets Linebacker: "Launching the largest collegiate women's flag football league is a game-changing moment that will create opportunities that inspire and elevate the game. The programs the Jets have launched in the UK and Ireland have shown how much passion and talent exists for this sport worldwide. Now women will have the chance to experience what college football gave so many of us—competition, community, and growth."

Sierra Wishnefsky, Penn State Schuylkill Athlete: "I couldn't imagine being a little girl and seeing, 'they're playing in a league sponsored by the New York Jets, an NFL team,' just having the name there -- this conference is going to open so many doors."

About ECAC

The ECAC (Eastern College Athletic Conference) is an eighty-eight year-old organization with over 200 members schools across all three NCAA Divisions - I, II and III—that exists to enhance the experience of student-athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics, and provide great value for universities and colleges, by sponsoring championships, leagues, bowl games, tournaments and other competitions throughout the Northeast and beyond. The ECAC also hosts a comprehensive esports program with more than 300 member schools across the country fielding 2500 teams participating in 24 different esports games, streamed live four nights a week.

About Betty Wold Johnson Foundation

The Betty Wold Johnson Foundation is dedicated to honoring the enduring legacy of Betty Wold Johnson — a visionary philanthropist and beloved matriarch of the Johnson family. Guided by her deep compassion, humility, and unwavering belief in the dignity of every individual, the Foundation supports initiatives that uplift communities and foster lasting impact across education, public service, arts and sports.

Rooted in Betty Wold Johnson’s lifelong commitment to civic responsibility and the American experience, the Foundation champions access to essential resources such as food, shelter, education, and employment. It invests in innovative programs, scientific research, and cultural institutions that enrich the spirit and strengthen the fabric of society.

From her historic \$11 million gift to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center — the largest individual donation in its history — to her steadfast support of the Liberty Science Center, McCarter Theatre, Princeton Hospital, and the Lupus Research Alliance, Ms. Johnson’s philanthropy was as bold as it was personal. Her legacy is one of generosity, grace, and a belief that every life is worthy of dignity and opportunity.

The Foundation continues her work with thoughtful stewardship, cost-effective giving, and a commitment to reaching the greatest number of people with every dollar donated.

About New York Jets

The New York Jets were founded in 1959 as the New York Titans, an original member of the American Football League (AFL). The Jets won Super Bowl III, defeating the NFL’s Baltimore Colts in 1969. In 1970, the franchise joined the National Football League in the historic AFL–NFL merger that set the foundation for today’s league. As part of a commitment to its fan base through innovation and experiences, the team has created initiatives such as, its trailblazing Jets Rewards program, a state-of-the-art mobile app, and 1JD Entertainment, a comprehensive content platform that gives fans greater access to the team across all digital and social platforms. The organization takes great pride in a long-standing, year-round commitment to their community. These programs are funded by the New York Jets Foundation and look to positively influence the lives of young men and women in the tri-state area, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The organization supports the efforts of the Lupus Research Alliance, youth football and numerous established charitable organizations and causes sponsored by the NFL. The New York Jets play in MetLife Stadium, which opened in 2010, and are headquartered at the Atlantic Health Jets Training Center in Florham Park, New Jersey. For more information about the New York Jets visit newyorkjets.com.

¹ The 2026 championship game will be played at the Atlantic Health Jets Training Center due to the 2026 World Cup.

* Will begin game play in Spring of 2027