

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**EASTSIDE’S ARIANNA HAYNES-BARKSDALE ATTENDS SUPER BOWL LVII COURTESY OF
THE N.Y. JETS**

Basketball Lady Ghosts’ guard is also a pioneering girls flag football standout

****Photo attached: See end of release for caption.****

GLENDALE, Ariz. – Amidst all of the fanfare and excitement of Super Bowl LVII, one of the Eastside Lady Ghosts’ guards was among the faces in the crowd, courtesy of the New York Jets.

That’s because Arianna Haynes-Barksdale not only plays for the Eastside Girls Basketball Team. She also plays for the Eastside Flag Football Ghosts. Haynes-Barksdale was among a group of flag football players who were welcomed to Met Life Stadium at the end of January for the announcement of the expansion of the Girls High School Flag Football League. It was at that event where she was awarded two tickets to Super Bowl LVII.

“Ever since I was young, I was basically growing up around guys who had been playing,” said Haynes-Barksdale, [in a flag football promotional video released last month](#) by the New York Jets organization. “My brothers, they had been playing since they’ve been born too. I fell in love with the sport.”

Haynes-Barksdale is not alone in being a young woman in love with football. Her teammate, Jayleen Valera, see the chance to play flag football as a way to build greater equity between men and women.

“People are seeing that women are also capable of doing the things that guys are able to do,” Chambers said in the video.

Eastside High School got in on the ground floor of the increasingly popular sport of Girls Flag Football as one of the Girls High School Flag Football League’s original eight teams in 2021. More than 100 high school teams in Long Island, upstate New York, and New Jersey will be a part of that league this spring.

Eastside Lady Ghosts Basketball Head Coach Brandon Pilgrim and Athletic Supervisor, T.J. Hill are slated to be the coaches of the Eastside Lady Ghosts Flag Football Team. About 25 student-athletes are on the roster with their first game scheduled to be on April 13th at Nutley High School. Their first home game will be on April 27th at 6:30 p.m. at Bauerle Field.

Meanwhile, Kennedy High School has established a team of its own coached by Football Head Coach Ron Jackson. A meeting of interested student-athletes has been scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 15th at 3:45 p.m. at Kennedy High School’s Front Café.

“The establishment of Girls Flag Football Teams at our high schools is creating more opportunities for our young women to be athletically competitive,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. “I want to thank

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everyone who worked to make these opportunities available to our student-athletes including Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly, our athletic supervisors T.J. Hill and Scott Durham, and our coaches, Brandon Pilgrim and Ron Jackson. We're looking forward to cheering our young women on in the upcoming season this spring.”

Photo 1: Arianna Haynes-Barksdale, right, and Jesse Linder, vice-president of community relations for the New York Jets.

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