



Media Contact:
Jonathan Jaffe
908-789-0700
jonathan@jaffecom.com

Flag Football Scores Big with High Point School Students

LODI, NJ (October 11, 2026) — Crimson, orange and yellow leaves dot the trees and blanket the ground. There's a crisp chill in the air, and the sky is a deep blue. It's fall, which means pumpkin spice, apple picking — and football.

At High Point School, students with special needs are embracing that tradition through intramural flag football games each Friday morning.

The game is much more than a recreational activity. It also gives students with disabilities another incentive to meet behavioral and academic expectations while developing skills that extend beyond the field.

All High Point students in grades 6–12 are eligible to play, provided they meet certain standards, said physical education teacher James Hile. To participate, students must maintain a certain behavioral level, which the school calls “New Hire,” stay on top of their academics and receive medical clearance.

“The program is unique to High Point and provides students with an incentive to maintain a high standard within our behavioral system,” Hile explained. “Students work toward earning the privilege of participating in a structured flag football game with their peers.”

Although the games are intramural rather than league play, students develop many of the same skills that organized youth sports teach athletes.

“The program provides opportunities for students to develop fair play, teamwork, resiliency, self-control and the ability to overcome adversity,” Hile said. “Students also learn how to manage both winning and losing appropriately, with dignity and sportsmanship.”

High Point Supervisor Cindy Pulido said the program has benefited students in many ways.

“Flag football gives our students so much more than an opportunity to play a sport,” Pulido said. “It gives them a chance to build confidence, develop teamwork and communication skills, stay active, and experience the pride that comes from being part of a team.”

Flag football has become increasingly popular across the U.S. as concerns have grown about concussions and other head injuries associated with youth tackle football.

Because players pull flags rather than tackle opponents to stop a play, flag football carries a very low risk of serious injury, compared to tackle. Flag football also requires less equipment, making the sport more accessible to all students.

Blocking and physical contact are limited or prohibited. Games are also often played with fewer players on each side, placing greater emphasis on speed, agility, passing, route running and teamwork while greatly reducing the risk of contact-related injuries.

Hile said offering flag football also requires students to manage competition appropriately, follow the structure of the game and demonstrate good sportsmanship. “The expectations of High Point’s behavioral system continue to apply throughout the activity, and staff reinforce those expectations during the games,” he said.

For High Point, those lessons are part of what makes the program valuable both on and off the field.

“These opportunities to connect with their peers, challenge themselves and celebrate one another’s successes are incredibly meaningful,” Pulido said. “We see the positive impact of the program not only on the field, but throughout our school community.”

High Point School of Bergen County is a New Jersey State Department of Education–approved private special education school for students in grades 6–12. It serves students with a variety of needs, including autism, emotional and behavioral disorders, and specific learning disabilities. Learn more at highpointschool.com