



## NEWS RELEASE

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## NATIONAL FLAG FOOTBALL AND PRO FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME ACADEMY PRODUCES BIGGEST YOUTH FLAG EVENT IN HISTORY

### 180 Flag Teams from Around the Country and World Travel to Canton for Championship Event

**CANTON, OHIO** – Last weekend, two giants in the youth football space teamed up to produce the world's biggest youth flag event. National Flag Football, the nation's top flag football company and the Pro Football Hall of Fame Academy, producers of the top football events in the world, produced an epic flag event that was unlike no other in the history of football.

By all standards, the championship event hosted at the birthplace of professional football shattered flag football record for the ages. More than 5,000 athletes, coaches and parents descended on Canton for a steamy but electric weekend of exciting flag football.

More than 180 flag teams, featuring boys, girls, youth and high school teams were treated to a big-time press conference, tour of Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium, a Welcome Ceremony featuring Gold Jacket Rod Woodson and special guests Izeel Rese (Director of NFL Flag) and Jen Welter (first female coach in the NFL), a breakdown contest and a Pizza Dinner for championship teams.

More than 15 MVP athletes were selected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame Academy to train with the best athletes in the country next July. The selection was overseen by top college scout Gary Howard and former NFL General Manager Ray Farmer.

"It was exciting to host the biggest and best flag event ever created," commented Academy Director Richard McGuinness. "Canton hosts the best in football from Cradle to Canton and this event fit perfectly within our portfolio. We saw the next generation of football talent make plays all weekend long," stated McGuinness.

“We were thrilled with the overwhelming response by our teams from throughout the country who decided to participate in this special weekend and build on the National Flag Football legacy in the exciting flag space. The post-event feedback was unbelievable,” stated **Bryan Ledin**, National Flag Football Executive Director.

By the numbers, Ledin and McGuinness believe there has not been a single bigger youth flag event produced in football based on their research of the flag space.

The event was supported by a grant from Visit Canton and sponsorship by Xenith, designer of top-rated football performance and protective gear and the Presenting Sponsor of the Pro Football Hall of Fame World Bowl. Xenith treated athletes, coaches and families to an interactive zone featuring the history of football and showcasing the latest Xenith performance protective equipment.

All flag teams from around the country were invited to compete in the recreation and elite divisions. Championship teams will be offered a guaranteed spot in the NFF championships in Tamps in December.



#### MORE INFORMATION:

National Flag Football – [www.nationalflagfootball.com](http://www.nationalflagfootball.com)

Background about the Pro football Hall of Fame Tackle Championship - [www.youthfootballchampionship.com](http://www.youthfootballchampionship.com)

Info on the Pro football Hall of Fame Academy - [www.profootballhofacademy.com](http://www.profootballhofacademy.com)

#### ABOUT THE JOHNSON CONTROLS HALL OF FAME VILLAGE

Johnson Controls Hall of Fame Village ([www.HOFvillage.com](http://www.HOFvillage.com)) is an \$889 million mixed-use development underway in Canton, Ohio. The once-in-a-lifetime project is being led by Hall of Fame Village LLC, a partnership between the **Pro Football Hall of Fame** ([www.ProFootballHOF.com](http://www.ProFootballHOF.com)) and **Industrial Realty Group** ([www.industrialrealtygroup.com](http://www.industrialrealtygroup.com)) as advised by **M. Klein & Company**, an independent strategic and financial advisory firm.

An historic 18-year partnership between **Johnson Controls** ([www.johnsoncontrols.com](http://www.johnsoncontrols.com)) and Hall of Fame Village was announced in November 2016. The agreement spearheaded the creation of the first-ever sports and entertainment “smart city” as defined by technologies connected within and across a secure digital infrastructure, optimizing operations, reducing resource use, and producing meaningful insights that increase productivity, comfort and safety for occupants. Building systems, information technology, communications, specialty, and more are integrated on a unified, intelligent network, enabling more control and advanced automation, more efficient and sustainable operations, and improved comfort and safety.

Ten major components of Johnson Controls Hall of Fame Village align with the Hall of Fame’s standing as “*The Most Inspiring Place on Earth!*” and will be integrated through technology to subtly and seamlessly share the values from the Game – commitment, integrity, courage, respect and excellence – with guests in an inspiring manner that will impact their lives.

