



## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Leandra Bernstein, [l\\_jbernstein@outlook.com](mailto:l_jbernstein@outlook.com)

### 24 NFL PLAYERS IN TAMPA TO SUPPORT ELITE 7V7 YOUTH TOURNAMENT

TAMPA, Fla. — Nearly 1,000 people attended the inaugural Sandlot 7v7 Pro-Am Challenge Saturday, where 38 NFL-sponsored youth teams competed head-to-head for the championship. This was an elite, high-level flag football tournament where teams were coached, mentored or advised by an NFL player. The event was the first-ever partnership between the NFL Players Association (NFLPA), **Lamar Jackson's** Forever Dreamers Foundation and **Abe Elam's** T.E.A.M. Elam Foundation.



*Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton works with a 12U team at the Sandlot 7v7 tournament in Tampa, Fla., March 26, 2022. (Photo credit: Sandlot 7v7 Pro-Am Challenge)*

Sandlot had 11 active NFL players and 13 retired players on-site at the Tournament SportsPlex of Tampa Bay coaching teams and training young athletes. The event highlighted the work NFL players have put into their communities through the development of youth. Carolina Panthers quarterback **Cam Newton** fielded three teams and had coaching assistance from former cornerback **Adam “Pacman” Jones**. 2019 MVP **Lamar Jackson**, two-time Super Bowl champion **Torrey Smith**, and 11-year veteran cornerback **Drayton Florence** each entered two teams in the tournament. Miami Dolphins quarterback **Teddy Bridgewater**, three-time Super Bowl champion **LeGarrette Blount** and 2014 Walter Payton Man of the Year **Thomas Davis** were at the event to support their teams.

“Bringing together past, present and future generations of the game has never been done in this context,” said **Dexter Santos**, vice president of player services for the NFLPA. “This was inspiring for the kids who got

6231 PGA Blvd Suite 104-203 Palm Beach Gardens, FL. 33418



unparalleled mentorship and the players also. These players remember being inspired when they were younger and now, they're paying it forward to the next generation.”



*C1N's 18U team huddles up with coach at the Sandlot 7v7 tournament in Tampa, Fla., Saturday, March 26, 2022. (Photo credit: Sandlot 7v7 Pro-Am Challenge)*

This single-elimination tournament featured local Florida teams and the country's most recognized 7v7 teams split into four divisional brackets. The 18U division winners were the Certified Dawgs from Central Florida and sponsored by Super Bowl champion **Rod Rutherford**. **Cam Newton's** C1N Red from the Atlanta region took home the 15U championship. Trinity Elite, a local Tampa team, won the 14U bracket. **Odell Beckham, Jr.'s** OBJ Elite from Chandler, Ariz., were the 12U champions. Youth also participated in a skills challenge for speed, best hands and most accurate quarterback.



Winners of the 2022 Sandlot skills challenge: Jaiden Fair, speed; Camden Smith, hands; Julian McFadden, speed; Tavion Greaves, hands; Amer Ellis, quarterback; Ryder Noche, speed. Not pictured: Isiah Allen, speed; Salomon Georges, quarterback. (Photo credit: Sandlot 7v7 Pro-Am Challenge)

The tournament focused on hard work, sportsmanship and exposure. NFL players offered youth participants advice on gameplay, technique and the resilience necessary to advance to the next level in football and in life. “This is an opportunity that a lot of these kids may never get a chance to do again,” said **Blount**. “They get a chance to absorb an unlimited amount of knowledge from so many of these guys. ...It’s life-changing for some.”

The PRO-AM Challenge is envisioned to be the first in a series of Sandlot 7v7 tournaments to connect youth and NFL mentors. “The reach of this tournament is unlimited. We had so many different people here from around the country and around the world,” said **Elam**. “We’re definitely looking forward to next year being bigger.”



*LeGarrette Blount advising young players at the Sandlot 7v7 tournament in Tampa, Fla., March 26, 2022. (Photo credit: Sandlot 7v7 Pro-Am Challenge)*

Sandlot's partners provided an educational dimension to the tournament. As part of a shared mission to support the whole athlete, iD Tech, the world's leading STEM education camp, provided 10 scholarships for underserved players. AR-51, a next-generation tech developer based in Israel, broke new ground by making the Sandlot Pro-Am Challenge in Tampa the first 7v7 tournament filmed using augmented reality.

The 2022 Sandlot Pro-Am Challenge was made possible through the support of the Tampa Bay Sporting Commission, the NFL, the NFLPA, Legit Ballaz 7v7, No Kid Hungry, Xenith, Bang Energy, Seven on Seven Unlimited, Inc., 2Yards & A Cloud Of Dust, High Point Gamer, iD Tech and AR-51. Team Sandlot is grateful for the volunteers from the Lakewood High School football team, the University of Tampa Sports Management Program and members of the Athletic Lifestyle Management Academy (ALMA).

For more information about the Sandlot 7v7 teams and sponsors visit [7v7unlimited.com](https://7v7unlimited.com) or follow Sandlot on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).