SHE'S PART OF THE GAME

Canadian Flag Football, Heritage & the Grey Cup Festival Overview

Target Audience	Core Launch Media	Curricular Scope
Grades 4 to 9 (Div 2 and Div 3)	YouTube Premiere Panel (Hosted by Kate Beirness)	Cross curricular (ELA, SS, Wellness and Phys. Ed.)

1. Teacher Quick Start Guide

Developed by Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in partnership with the Canadian Football League (CFL) and the 2026 Grey Cup Festival, She's Part of the Game is a national curriculum initiative. Through stories of women in Canadian football and examples of the game's continued growth, including flag football, the program helps students in Grades 4 to 9 develop belonging, community pride, and leadership skills.

> **Core Teacher Principle:** *Prior football knowledge or athletic experience is not required. By highlighting authentic roles in coaching, officiating, sports journalism, event operations, health, and community fandom, the curriculum ensures every student discovers a meaningful place in the game.*

Key Program Characteristics for Instructional Planning:

- **Featured Digital Panel:** A professionally produced YouTube Premiere panel lasting 30 to 40 minutes hosted by TSN's Kate Beirness, featuring national team flag athletes, CFL game day performers, and youth superfans.
- **Accessible Everyday Materials:** Designed for zero barrier implementation using basic classroom items (chart paper, sticky notes, role cards, and print organizers).
- **Flexible Delivery Pathways:** Easily adapted from a single video inquiry lasting 45 minutes, a comprehensive cross curricular unit with five modules, or a full Physical Education Sport Education season of 10 to 15 lessons.
- **Differentiated by Division:** Includes concrete scaffolds for Division 2 (Grades 4 to 6: image assisted role cards, visual timelines, guided reflection) and Division 3 (Grades 7 to 9: primary source critique, historical case studies, action plans covering 30 days).

2. Five Core Program Themes

The curriculum is grounded in five pillars that bridge sports heritage with students' personal growth and community involvement:

- **1. Belonging and Identity:** Football brings people together through more than athletic ability. Students explore how strengths such as communication, organization, creativity, empathy, leadership, and teamwork contribute to the game. By recognizing these different skills and roles, students can see how everyone has something meaningful to offer.
- **2. Women and Girls in Canadian Football:** Students examine the evolving social history of women in sport, celebrating pioneers such as the Vancouver Mardi Gras club, the Maritime Women's Football League (MWFL), the Western Women's Canadian Football League (WWCFL), and groundbreaking executive leaders like Jo Anne Polak.
- **3. Canadian Football Culture and Grey Cup Traditions:** Shared rituals, team traditions, and community celebrations connect Canadians across generations and regions. Students investigate the history of the Grey Cup Festival and consider how shared celebrations strengthen community connections.
- **4. The Rise of Flag Football & Olympic Milestone:** Noncontact flag football has emerged as one of the world's fastest growing sports. Students explore its evolution from postwar recreation to national university club pilots and its official inclusion in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games.

- **5. Youth Agency, Leadership and Change:** Students are not simply learning about changes in football. They are part of the change happening now. By sharing their ideas, creating new traditions, and designing more inclusive game day experiences, students help shape a future where more people can see themselves as part of the game.

3. Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the program, students across Grades 4 through 9 will be able to:

- **Explain Cultural Traditions:** Articulate how Canadian football, Grey Cup festivities, and shared team rituals build intergenerational identity and community connection across diverse populations.
- **Analyze Historical Progress:** Trace significant historical milestones of women and girls in Canadian football, identifying barriers overcome and ongoing opportunities for gender equity and inclusion.
- **Map Personal Pathways:** Identify personal strengths and connect them to authentic sports pathways in coaching, officiating, digital media, operations, athletic therapy, or community leadership.
- **Evaluate Historical Media & Sources:** Critically examine historical and contemporary media representations to determine whose voices have been historically centered or excluded in Canadian sports culture.
- **Design Inclusive Community Action:** Collaboratively produce and pitch a viable design brief for a welcoming game day tradition, school festival element, or active living initiative tailored for newcomers, youth, and families.

4. National Curricular Competency Connections

To streamline lesson integration across all Canadian provinces and territories, the program aligns directly with the National Competency Framework (Grades 4 to 9) across core subject areas:

Competency Domain	Primary Subjects	Classroom Evidence & Student Actions
Identity and Belonging	Social Studies, ELA, Wellness, Physical Education	Reflecting on personal strengths; examining how diverse backgrounds enrich sports communities; evaluating how team traditions build belonging.
Communication & Expression	English Language Arts, Social Studies, Wellness	Active listening during panel viewing; respectful dialogue in small groups; creating persuasive proposals, player profiles, game recaps, and podcasts.
Critical Thinking & Inquiry	Social Studies, ELA, Wellness, Physical Education	Analyzing historical timelines; evaluating source credibility; using 'Here Now / There Then' thinking routines to assess evolving social access.
Leadership & Collaboration	Physical Education, Wellness, ELA, Social Studies	Fulfilling authentic team and event roles (coach, official, media, inclusion lead); practicing sportsmanship, peer encouragement, and constructive conflict repair.
Well Being and Personal Growth	Wellness, Physical Education, ELA	Setting realistic participation goals; embracing trial and error; building resilience; recognizing physical, social, and emotional benefits of active play.
Citizenship & Community Engagement	Social Studies, Wellness, Physical Education, ELA	Designing inclusive game day experiences and accessible school festivals; proposing practical steps to remove participation barriers for underrepresented groups.

5. Program Architecture: The 5 Step Learning Arc

The curriculum is organized into a progressive instructional sequence of five modules that moves students from personal storytelling to historical inquiry and culminates in collaborative community creation:

Step 1: See It. Shape It. Change the Game (35 to 60 min)

Focus: Storytelling & Dialogue | Students watch curated segments of the YouTube Premiere panel, engaging in a structured 'Watch and Pause' routine. Learners track speakers' core values, personal identity, and pivotal decisions, completing a reflective sheet on small, realistic leadership actions to promote belonging.

Step 2: My Place in the Game (60 to 75 min)

Focus: Identity & Roles Inquiry | Broadens student understanding of sports involvement beyond the field of play. Grades 4 to 6 participate in a 'Football Community Picture Walk' and 'Strength to Role Corners' matching personal traits to role cards. Grades 7 to 9 build a comprehensive 'Skills to Roles Pathway' chart with a concrete action step to complete within 30 days.

Step 3: Changing the Game: Women & Girls in Football (2 to 4 periods)

Focus: Historical Perspectives | Explores social history, equity, and representation. Students reconstruct timelines spanning early clubs to the WWCFL and CFL executive milestones, utilizing 'Here Now / There Then' tools and 'Four Corners' debates to analyze evolving access and media coverage.

Step 4: History in the Making: The Rise of Flag Football (2 to 3 periods)

Focus: Modern Evolution | Investigates the explosive growth of noncontact flag football from military recreation to university clubs and the LA 2028 Olympics. Students employ 'Take Note' routines and 'Slow Complexity' observations, creating visual milestone timelines with future milestones proposed by students.

Step 5: Building the Future of Football (2 to 3 periods)

Focus: Culminating Design Project | Synthesizes prior learning into an authentic design challenge. Working in teams, students research Grey Cup traditions and produce a comprehensive Tradition Design Brief, storyboard, or video pitch for an inclusive game day celebration welcoming underrepresented groups.

> She's Part of the Game shows that football includes much more than what happens on the field. By recognizing the pioneers who created opportunities and giving students the tools to build new traditions, the program invites every student to find a meaningful place in the game.