



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 10

June, 2026

Every season, young athletes across District 4-A1 take the field — not just because of their talent, but because community partners like you made it possible. This month, we spotlight youth and sports: the programs, the people, and the partnerships behind them."

In this Issue

Featured – More than a Game: The Legacy of Lions All-Star Football

Be-Cause It Matters - Lions Youth Programs At-A-Glance

Featured – How Lions Supports Youth Sports

Featured – From Sidelines to the Spotlight

Partnerships that Power Change

Proud Moments

Video of the Month

Did you Know???

On the Calendar | Save the Date

Let's Connect | Find a Club Near You

Featured Story

More Than a Game: The Legacy of Lions All-Star Football

Across California, Lions All-Star Football brings graduating high school athletes one final opportunity to represent their schools, compete with other top players, and experience the pride of being selected as an all-star — celebrating young people, strengthening school pride, and creating memories that last long after the final whistle.

A Decades-Old Tradition Thrives Today. The very first North vs. South All-Star Classic began in 1959 and was long associated with the Brea Lions Club (Orange County).

District 4-A1 brought this football tradition to the Central Valley in 1977. That means the Lions All-Star Football Game is preparing for its 50th annual matchup this year. To honor this milestone, the tradition has expanded to include a girls' flag football all-star contest for the first time. Not to be outdone — everyone loves a good-hearted rivalry — District 4-C1 in Northern California hosted its first game a year later in 1978.

One Final Game, One Last Honor

For the selected athletes, the Lions All-Star Football Game is more than just a spot on a roster. It is one last chance to wear their school colors with pride, stand under the lights, and share the field with players they may have competed against for years.

The game is a lot of fun, but its significance is not lost on the players. They know they were chosen not only for their athletic ability, but also for the way they represent their schools, teammates, and communities.

"Probably the best thing about this group is that they are great people," said Velazquez, one of the selected players. "That's something that might be lost in this whole thing here because people just think of the athletic part of it, but they are tremendous people."

For the players, it is a particularly unique experience. Athletic competition is familiar, but what stands out for them is the tremendous people (Lions, coaches, fans) they meet in the process. They are also put in the new position of former rivals together as teammates.

"It's pretty crazy ...I look at them in practice, and I'm like 'Dang! We're on the same team now.' But I'm glad, they're some nice, good athletes and I'm glad that they are on my team now and I don't have to go against them." [Source](#).



A Community Tradition Under the Lights

On game night, the Lions All-Star Football Game belongs to more than the athletes on the field. It belongs to the families in the stands, the coaches on the sidelines, the volunteers behind the scenes, and the communities cheering as their local players take the field one more time.

The celebration begins before kickoff. Players, families, coaches, and supporters are recognized through game-day activities and related events, including the annual banquet. By the time fans arrive at the stadium, the game has already become more than competition — it is a community send-off for graduating seniors.

Over the years, the Lions All-Star Football Game has earned attention, not only because of its tradition, but because the games themselves have delivered memorable moments. Cal-Hi Sports noted that if the 50th annual matchup is anything like the last two games, “the excitement meter could be off the charts.” The 2024 game was decided by a touchdown with just four seconds left, while the 2025 matchup saw the North hold off the South in a 42–37 finish. Local coverage has also spotlighted the athletes behind the helmets, including Tracy-area players selected to represent their schools in the 49th Central California Lions All-Star Football Game.



A Milestone Year — And a New Door Opens

The 50th annual Lions All-Star Football Game marks a major moment for District 4-A1, but this year's celebration also points toward the future. For the first time, the event will include a girls' flag football all-star contest, giving top female athletes from the same Lions All-Star Football District their own place under the lights.

That addition reflects the rapid growth of girls' flag football across California. The 2026 event will begin with the girls' flag game at 5:00 p.m., followed by the boys' all-star tackle game at 7:15 p.m. at Tracy High School's Wayne Schneider Stadium. The milestone also brings new community support — the All Rise Foundation is joining the event as the presenting sponsor, connecting the 50-year tradition with a broader message of youth opportunity, community pride, and opening the field to more student-athletes. Awards will be presented after each game.

Be There for the 50th

The 50th Annual Lions All-Star Football Game will be held **Saturday, June 20, 2026**, at **Tracy High School's Wayne Schneider Stadium**, located at **315 E. 11th Street, Tracy, CA 95376**. Gates open at **4:00 p.m.** The evening begins with the **Girls' All-Star Flag Football Game at 5:00 p.m.**, followed by the **Lions All-Star Football Game at 7:15 p.m.** General admission tickets are **\$15** and include both games. Tickets are available online through **GoFan**.

Be-Cause It Matters – Lions Youth Programs At-A-Glance



Lions Youth Programs

From Cubs to Leos — and Beyond

Service. Leadership. Opportunity. Support.

Lions empower young people to grow as volunteers, leaders, artists, travelers, and city and community changemakers.

Join the Pride



Cub Program (Ages 12 & under)
Fun service activities for kids.



Leo Clubs (Ages 12–30)
Youth-led service & leadership.
(Alpha; 12–18 • Omega: 18–30)



Leo-Lion Program
Leos becoming Lions.

Lead & Be Recognized



Young Leaders in Service Award (Ages 12–18)
Outstanding youth service.



Peace Poster Contest (Ages 11–13)
Art for global peace.



Peace Essay Contest (Ages 11–13)
Essays by visually impaired youth.



Lions Quest
Life skills education.

Big Experiences



Youth Camps & Exchange
Cultural & travel programs.



Diabetes Camps
Support for diabetic kids.

“Every Lion was once a young person who chose to serve.”

Support for Kids & Families



Childhood Cancer Support (LCIF)
Helping children & families in need.

Community Traditions



Lions All-Star Football
Showcasing student athletes.



Leo Grants
Funding youth projects.

Want to get involved or sponsor a youth program?

Ask your local Lions club about:

Cubs • Leos • Lions Quest • Peace Contests • Youth Exchange • Camps • All-Star Football

Featured Story

How Lions Support Youth Sports

Youth sports are easy to recognize from the outside: the uniforms, the practices, the cheers from the sidelines, and the thrill of game day. But beneath the scoreboard, something much more important is often taking shape.

Young athletes are learning how to work with others, recover from disappointment, celebrate shared victories, and discover what it feels like to be part of something bigger than themselves.

That is why Lions Clubs have long supported youth sports in communities across California — not just because games are fun to watch, but because sports can help young people build confidence, connection, discipline, and resilience.

Lowering the Barriers

For many young people, the chance to play sports depends on more than talent or desire. It often depends on whether a family can afford registration fees, uniforms, shoes, equipment, travel costs, or the extra expenses that come with being part of a team.

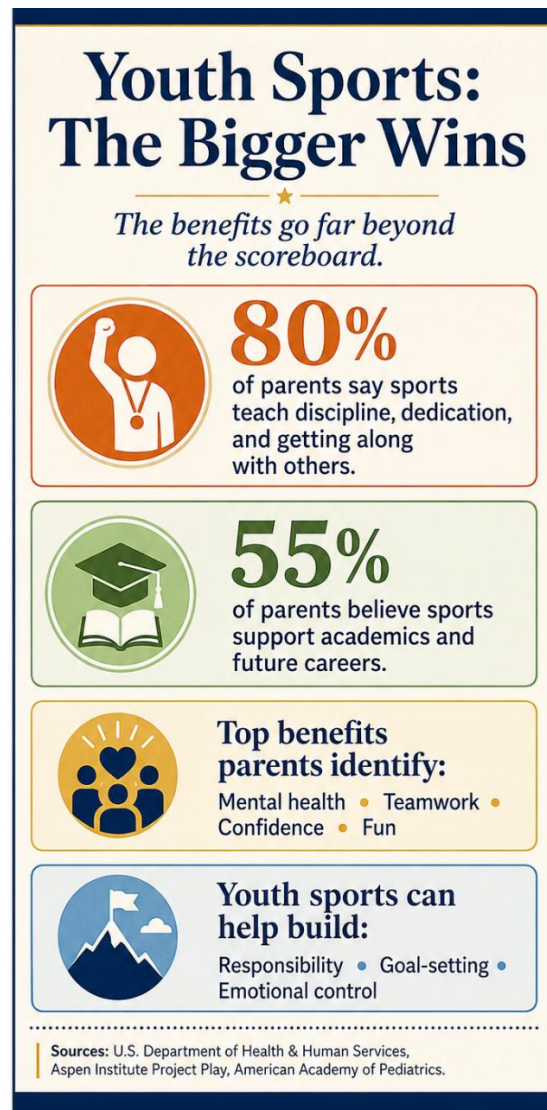
That is where community support matters. Lions Clubs help open doors by sponsoring teams, supporting school athletic programs, funding scholarships, purchasing equipment, and helping local leagues raise the resources they need to keep kids involved. Sometimes that support is visible, like a banner on the field or a check presented to a team. Other times, it happens quietly in the background — a donation, a volunteer shift, a fundraiser, or a connection that helps make the season possible.

These efforts may seem simple, but for a young athlete, they can make the difference between watching from the sidelines or stepping onto the field.

Experiencing the Bigger Wins

The scoreboard may tell one story, but the bigger wins often happen in quieter ways — during practice, after a tough loss, in the discipline of showing up, and in the confidence that grows when a young person realizes they can improve.

Youth sports may begin with practices, games, and scoreboards, but the deeper wins often happen quietly. Research and youth development experts point to benefits that reach far beyond physical fitness: self-confidence, teamwork, emotional control, responsibility, resilience, and a stronger sense of belonging. The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that young athletes often learn skills and values they can use in everyday life, including personal responsibility, sportsmanship, goal-setting, and emotional control.



The scoreboard may tell one story, but the bigger wins often happen in quieter ways — during practice, after a tough loss, in the discipline of showing up, and in the confidence that grows when a young person realizes they can improve.

Research supports what coaches, parents, and volunteers often see firsthand. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, youth sports can contribute to immediate and long-term benefits for young people, families, and communities. Their National Youth Sports Strategy notes that 80% of parents believe sports help children learn discipline,


dedication, and how to get along with others. Another 55% believe sports will benefit their children academically and in their future careers.

Those benefits go well beyond physical activity. The Aspen Institute's Project Play reports that parents identify improved mental health, fun, teamwork, and self-confidence as leading benefits of organized sports.

That is the bigger picture. When young people participate in sports, they are not only learning how to compete. They are learning how to cooperate, recover, adjust, keep going, and contribute to something larger than themselves. Those are lessons that can follow them into school, work, relationships, leadership, and service.

The Bottom Line

Lions don't just support games. They help give kids the opportunity to belong to something bigger than themselves, experience the power of being part of a team, and build the confidence to face challenges on and off the field.

 <p>Lions changed my life.</p> <p>I would never have been ambitious enough to run for Governor of Georgia. I would never have dreamed of being President of the United States <i>if it were not for the Lions.</i></p> <p><small>Lion Jimmy Carter, January 27, 2009</small></p>	<p>President Jimmy Carter served as a Lion for over 60 years. Starting out in his hometown of Plains, GA, President Carter rose through the ranks from Club President to District Governor and eventually Chair of the Governor's Council of GA.</p> <p>He worked closely with LCIF and the Carter Center to combat preventable/treatable blindness in Africa and Latin America.</p> <p>In summary, Carter's Lions service spanned more than six decades, making him one of the longest-serving Lions in the organization's history and a model of sustained leadership and compassion.</p>
--	---

Featured Story

From Sidelines to the Spotlight

The spotlight usually lands on the young athletes: the touchdown, the final basket, the winning goal, the personal best. But just beyond the edge of that spotlight are the people who helped make the moment possible — the coach who stayed late, the referee who kept the game fair, the parent who never missed a pickup, the sponsor who helped pay for uniforms, and the community partner who believed every young person deserves a season worth remembering.

Unsung Heroes Behind the Scenes

Behind every young athlete in uniform is a small army of unsung heroes quietly working behind the scenes to make it all just happen. There are dozens of small acts of service that happen in the background without fanfare and often with little acknowledgment.

It could take the form of a parent rushing from work to make it to practice on time. A coach staying late to help one more player understand the play. A referee giving up their Saturday morning. A local business quietly helping cover costs so no child is left out.

These acts may seem small in the moment, but together they create something powerful. They tell young people that their community believes in them. They give kids a place to belong, adults to look up to, and experiences that can shape the way they see themselves.

That is the spotlight we do not always see — the one shining on the adults who make youth sports possible long before the scoreboard lights up.

What They Provide

Youth sports need more than fields, uniforms, and schedules. They need people willing to give their time, patience, resources, and steady encouragement. Coaches provide time and expertise. Referees provide structure and fairness. Parents provide transportation, commitment, and the steady presence that tells a child, “I am here for you.” Sponsors and community partners provide the financial and practical support that helps keep programs running and doors open.

Together, these contributions create the environment young athletes need to thrive. They make it possible for kids to practice, compete, learn, make mistakes, try again, and discover what they are capable of becoming. For many young people, that support becomes part of the lesson. They learn that success is rarely built alone. It grows through teamwork, trust, commitment, and the people who keep showing up.

Making It Real

Just by way of example, Lions Clubs from around the District stepped up last year and made sure that the players and coaches got a good meal after practice. Special shout-out to these clubs: Clements Lockford, Denair, Hilmar, Hughson, Linden, , Lodi Mexican-American, Patterson, Stockton Host, Waterford, and Lions All-Star Football Committee.

A couple of years ago, the Atwater-Winton Lions Club donated \$10,000 to help the City of Atwater improve the youth soccer field scoreboard and lighting at Atwater Veteran's Park. It's a strong example of Lions investing in places where young people play, grow, and gather.

In the past, Merced Breakfast Lions Club helped bring back the Merced County All-Star Football Games as a doubleheader featuring girls flag football and senior high school football players. The goal was to showcase student-athletes, honor athletic excellence, and support scholarships for academic achievement.

Why It Matters

Why does all this matter? Because young people are always paying attention. They notice who cheers from the stands, who teaches them after a mistake, who treats the game fairly, who helps cover the cost, and who keeps showing up even when no one is handing out applause.

That kind of support does more than help a season run smoothly. It teaches young athletes that they are valued. It gives them examples of commitment, service, fairness, patience, and generosity. It shows them that community is not just something we talk about — it is something people do for one another.

This is what service looks like in real life. Not always a formal project or a public ceremony. Sometimes it looks like a coach holding one more practice, a parent making one more drive, a referee giving up their Saturday, or a local sponsor making sure one more child gets the chance to play. When Lions, families, schools, businesses, and community partners work together, youth sports become more than recreation. They become a shared investment in young people — and a living message that our kids matter, and we are willing to show up for them.

Bottom Line

Youth sports are powered by people you may never see on the field — but without whom, nothing on that field would be possible.

Partnerships that Power Change

Youth sports remind us that community change rarely happens because one person or one organization does everything alone. It happens when people come together around a shared belief: our young people deserve opportunities to grow, belong, and discover what they are capable of becoming.

This month's stories highlight football, youth sports, volunteers, and families — but the message reaches far beyond the field. Every strong community is built by people who choose to show up. A coach shows up with patience. A parent shows up with commitment. A sponsor shows up with resources. A community partner shows up with vision. And when those efforts come together, young people receive more than a season of play. They receive a living example of what partnership looks like.

That is where you come in.

As a community partner, you can help ***turn good intentions into real opportunities***. You may be able to sponsor a team, provide meeting space, donate supplies, share expertise, promote an event, mentor young leaders, or simply help connect the right people at the right time. Not every partnership has to be large to be meaningful. Sometimes the smallest “yes” becomes the opening a young person, family, or community program needs.

Lions Clubs are always looking for people, businesses, schools, nonprofits, and community groups who want to make a difference together. If you see a need, have an idea, or want to explore a way to serve, we invite you to connect with us.

Change is powered by partnership — and every community needs people willing to help move it forward.

Proud Moments

We Do That????!!!

Out of the Box thinking is just like “another day in the office”

We Do Sports and Entertainment the Lions Way



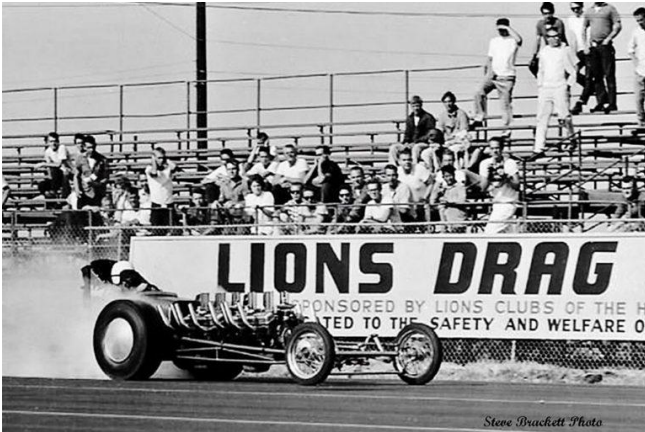
World Championship Snowmobile Derby Eagle River, Wisconsin

For more than a race, this Lions-sponsored event brings the community together around winter sports, local pride, and service in action — proving that Lions know how to make an impact in every season.



The Alice Springs Camel Cup Alice Springs, Australia

This uniquely Australian Day at the Races began in 1970 as a challenge between two Lions members, and the event was organized by the Lions Club of Alice Springs for several years.



Lions Drag Strip Los Angeles, California

The drag strip was an American raceway in the Wilmington district, adjacent to Long Beach that existed from 1955 to 1972. The track was named after its sponsor, Lions Clubs International, and featured many races that were sanctioned by the American Hot Rod Association (AHRA).

Saving and Preserving Our Planet



Belmont Mound State Park Lafayette County, Wisconsin

Belmont Mound State Park is a state park in Wisconsin, containing Belmont Mound, a 400-foot (120 m) hill. The park is managed by the Belmont Lions Club rather than the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. "Belmont" derives from the French for "beautiful mountain."

Video of the Month



Having trouble viewing it?

Watch it online at https://youtu.be/JwU-Io0Axl4?si=FC_MALTxkXQXJhOM

Did You Know???



Lions Clubs International President
Chancellor Bob Corlew
2016-2017

“
Every community, large
or small ... represents an
opportunity
”

Who is Bob Corlew?

Chancellor Bob Corlew, from Milton, Tennessee, was elected to serve as president of Lions Clubs International at the association's 99th International Convention held in Fukuoka, Japan, June 24 through 28, 2016.

Past President Corlew retired as chancellor for the State of Tennessee and a professor of law. In recognition of his service to the association, he has received numerous awards, including the Ambassador of Goodwill Award, the highest honor the association bestows upon its members.

In addition to his Lions activities, President Corlew has been active in the Boy Scouts of America, the Jaycees, and the American Red Cross. He has also served as a councilman in Milton and was a Major in the U.S. Army Reserve. President Corlew and his wife, Dianne, also a Lion and a Progressive Melvin Jones Fellow, have five children and eight grandchildren.



On the Calendar

Save the Date

UPCOMING PUBLIC EVENTS

06/05	Coffee Mixer (8:00-9:00am) at Garden Joy 929 W Main St, Ripon Chamber of Commerce Mixer Hosted by Ripon Lions	Ripon	
06/13	Merced All Star Football & Flag Football	Merced	Details
06/20	Fathers Day Event	West Point	Details
06/20	D4-A1 All Star Football Game	Tracy	Details
06/20	Hot Copper Car Show	Copperopolis	Details

SAVE THE DATE

07/04	4 th of July Parade	Moke Hill	Details
07/15	Destruction Derby	Turlock	Stay Tuned
07/16	Destruction Derby	Turlock	Stay Tuned



Find A Club *Near You*

Lions International has a Find A Club search function. To access it, use the following link:
[Find A Club.](#)

**Let's
CONNECT**



District Website
<https://lions4-a1.org>



District Email Box
4a1lions@gmail.com



Lions Clubs Intl
<https://lionsclubs.org>



Lion Gail Cates, Editor
newsletter@lions4-1.org



@4a1lionsclub



@4a1lions



@4a1lions



Like and Follow Our Clubs On Social Media

Click & Go



Ceres Lions
On Facebook



Escalon Lions
On Facebook



Hughson Lions
On Facebook



Linden Lions
On Facebook



Oakdale Lions
On Facebook



Stockton Host
On Facebook