

## YMCA pleased with first year of youth tackle football

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The YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City scored big with the Edmond community this season by adding tackle football to its lineup of youth sports for the first time this fall. A total of 90 kids played in the league.

"We were looking for a tackle football league where my son could not only learn to play the sport, but also gain character development from his participation which we knew he would get through a Y-run program," Edmond parent Rick Franklin said.

Franklin's son plays for the Mustangs, one of six fifth and sixth grade teams in the league. Third and fourth graders make up another six teams. The league played a seven game season prior to the championship playoffs last week.

The Wolves beat the Mustangs 26-6 for the fifth and sixth grade championship. The Vikings took home the third and fourth grade title in a 21-6 victory over the Thunder.

The Y has offered flag football in the past, but decided to add tackle football after Y members and others in the community expressed an interest in starting a local league.

"We were happy to have Edmond parents approach the Y about starting another tackle football league in the community," said Chris Berry, sports director for the YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City. "We find that many parents appreciate the Y's 'games approach' in youth sports, which shifts the focus from drills and winning to other important aspects of sportsmanship like leadership, teamwork and cooperation."

Prior to the fall football season, the Y hosted a two-week conditioning and skills camp at no additional cost to players. The camp introduced participants to tackle football, the Y's "games approach" and transitioned the players to full pads and helped increase their conditioning level. Registration for the 2010 tackle football season will begin in June. The Y plans to make tackle football available at all of the branches in the Greater Oklahoma City area.

Participants are expected to double next season, creating enough teams for a metro league.