

The NFL Global Junior Championship has evolved from a single game first played to showcase the talents of young American football players from Europe and Mexico in 1997 to become the exciting multi-team tournament that is today an integral part of the Super Bowl celebrations. In Detroit in 2006 the NFL GJC proudly celebrated its tenth anniversary at Super Bowl XL as teams from three continents converged on the famous Pontiac Silverdome.

The tournament has provided a platform on which future NFL, CFL, College Football and NFL Europe players have excelled. More than 40 Canadians have progressed to both college football and the CFL, including wide receiver WR Kevin Challenger (Boston College), OL David Bouchard (Syracuse), DB Etienne Boulay (UNH/Montreal Alouettes), and Jean-Philippe Abraham (Edmonton Eskimos).



Team Canada - 2007 Global Junior Champions

Year	Super Bowl City	Gold Medal	Silver/Bronze	Most Valuable Player
1997	New Orleans	Mexico	Europe	Constantin Ritzmann, DE, Europe
1998	San Diego	Mexico	Europe	Constantin Ritzmann, DE, Europe
1999	Miami	Europe	Mexico	Constantin Ritzmann, DE, Europe
2000	Atlanta	Canada	Europe / USA	Nick Wishart, RB, Canada
2001	Tampa Bay	USA	Canada / Japan	Jay Davis, QB, USA
2002	New Orleans	USA	Canada / Europe	Jason Spadoni, RB, USA
2003	San Diego	USA	Canada / Mexico	JC Cooper, LB, USA
2004	Houston	USA	Canada / Mexico	Brian Johnson, QB, USA
2005	Jacksonville	Canada	USA / Mexico	Jerome Messam, RB, Canada
2006	Detroit	Canada	USA / Japan	Samuel Fournier, RB, Canada

The adventure began at Super Bowl XXXI in New Orleans in **1997** when a quick and well-disciplined team of college freshmen and high school seniors representing Mexico proved too strong for a young Europe team and triumphed 30-6. In San Diego in **1998** in front of 9,000 fans, a 50-yard Europe field goal attempt fell short and Mexico was again victorious by a 13-12 margin.

Team Europe won the championship at the third attempt at Lockhart Stadium in Fort Lauderdale prior to Super Bowl XXXIII in **1999**. Europe eliminated Mexico's ability to make the big play and roared to a 29-8 win.

In Atlanta in **2000** an expanded four-team tournament saw Europe sweep Panama 20-0 in the semi finals, while **Canada** edged hosts USA 9-3. In a Championship Game played in below freezing temperatures fans lit fires on the sidelines to fend off the cold as **Canada** secured a slim 7-6 victory. In the bronze medal game USA romped to a 38-0 win.

Tampa Bay, Florida, was the setting for the **2001** NFL Global Junior Championship V. In the final and trailing 21-19, the **Canadians** tried to snatch victory at the death. Only a sack and finally an interception with 24 seconds remaining kept the USA defense on top to ensure a host nation triumphed for the first time.

In New Orleans in **2002**, Europe claimed the bronze medal, winning 27-16 against Japan, while the Championship Game was again a close contest. With defenses on top the USA led 16-8 until **Canada's** Mike Faulds threw a Hail Mary touchdown as time expired to pull within two points. The deuce conversion attempt sailed agonizingly through the hands of a wide receiver and USA held on for victory.

In San Diego in **2003** a record five teams competed as Mexico made a welcome return and outlasted Europe and beat Japan to finish third overall. The Championship Game proved to be another thrilling encounter between USA and **Canada**. USA recovered from a 21-7 deficit in a dramatic fourth quarter to force overtime. Arizona-bound quarterback Richard Kovalcheck underlined his credentials and broke Canadian hearts with a second touchdown pass to Johnny Principato, who had also caught the game-tying score.

Although the Houston-Harris County all stars lost to **Canada** in the first round stages in Houston in **2004**, they recovered to retain the NFL GJC crown with a 31-point shutout of their rivals from north of the border in the Championship Game.

The **2005** tournament in Jacksonville, FL, saw **Canada** finally overcome USA in a thrilling championship game, outlasting the home team 38-35 at a packed Bolles School Stadium. **Canada** had also triumphed over the USA in the round robin stage and celebrated head coach Danny Maciocia's appointment as the new head coach of the Edmonton Eskimos of the CFL.

The **2006** tournament was played indoors for the first time in the event's ten-year history at the Pontiac Silverdome in Michigan. **Canada** was in no mood to relinquish its title and swept convincingly through the first round without conceding a point. In the Championship Game **Canada's** defense again held firm to shut out USA 10-0 and Samuel Fournier's dominant ground attack earned him the MVP award.

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