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## **American Youth Football of Samoa Kicks Off 16th Season.**

The 16th Season for the American Youth Football of Samoa (AYFS) for 2025 kicked off on Saturday, January 25th, 2025, at the Veterans Memorial Stadium. In attendance for this special occasion were the Honorable Acting Governor Pulumataala Ae Ae Jr., members of the AYFS, proud families, the football teams and the cheerleading squads.

Reverend Iasepi Ulu of the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS) Fagatogo, delivered the sermon for the opening ceremony, sharing a simple yet profound message: “Speak Life.” Drawing inspiration from the Book of Psalms, chapter 150, verse 6 – *“Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord”* – Reverend Ulu emphasized that all achievements and successes come not from individual strength, life, or might, but from the will of God. “The significance of today lies in speaking life, hope, and love,” Reverend Ulu said. “We must share these words to encourage not only ourselves but also our teammates, friends, and families.” He acknowledged the aspirations of many participants to reach the NFL, citing Frankie Luvu of the Washington Commanders as an example of someone who began his journey through this very program. “By speaking life, we pray that all of you will have similar opportunities,” he added. In closing, Reverend Ulu addressed the players, offering a final message of encouragement: “May you have the wisdom, heart, and discipline to play, but most importantly, remember to Speak Life.”

The Honorable Acting Governor, Pulumataala Ae Ae Jr., delivered a special address, expressing his heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Honorable Governor Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula. “This is the first time I have been invited to such a special occasion, and as a strong advocate for our youth, it is a privilege to be here,” he remarked. “I have always believed that our children and youth represent the future of American Samoa. With that in mind, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the AYFS President and its members for their

dedication and commitment to this program, which has positively impacted our community for the past 16 years.” The Honorable Acting Governor Pulumataala Ae Ae Jr. also encouraged the players ‘Obey your parents, coaches, and teachers, as the Bible states: 'Honor your father and your mother, and things will go well for you.’” To express his gratitude for the occasion, the Honorable Governor generously donated \$2,000 to the AYFS in support of the program. To conclude his special address, the Honorable Acting Governor Pulumataala Ae Ae Jr. encouraged the youth to remain steadfast in obedience and discipline, urging them to use this program as a stepping stone to build a brighter future for themselves, their families, and American Samoa. “Our youth have suffered and lost their lives due to the devastating impact of drugs,” he stated. “I urge you, the youth, to avoid this destructive path, for it brings nothing but hardship. Obey your parents, live a life devoted to God, and blessings will flow abundantly. May God bless the 16th season of AYFS.”

AYFS President, Mr. Victor Avalos, thanked the Honorable Acting Governor for the special address and stated that these 16 years of the program have been nothing but a blessing “It has been an honor and privilege to serve this program for all these years. It is the hope that we bring to our children so that they will prosper and have an avenue towards a successful future”. President Avalos also thanked the American Samoa Government, the sponsors, the players, and especially the families who have consistently supported the program.

The AYFS season proudly features six teams and one cheer squad. Best wishes to all the teams for a successful and memorable 16th season.

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