T-Mobile's Friday Night 5G Lights Narrows the Field to 40 Schools Chasing a $1M Upgrade

October 8, 2026

Each finalist earns $25,000 and a T-Mobile-hosted Home Game Celebration as communities nationwide vote and rally for their hometown teams

Four Division Champions will score $250,000, a Gronk Fitness gym and more

BELLEVUE, Wash.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct. 8, 2026-- T-Mobile (NASDAQ: TMUS) today announced the Top 40 Division Finalists in its Friday Night 5G Lights competition, kicking off an exciting new phase where small-town schools across the country will compete division by division for a shot at the ultimate prize: a $1 million home field upgrade.

New this year, the Top 40 schools are divided into four divisions — West, Midwest, South and East — with 10 schools representing each region. Every finalist will receive $25,000 for their school and a T-Mobile-hosted Home Game Celebration, while fans can vote daily to help their favorite school advance. One Division Champion from each region will score $250,000, a Gronk Fitness gym valued at $90,000 and “The Big Deal” student leadership award prize of $5,000 — and remain in the running for the $1 million grand prize.

“We've seen how high school football brings people together in towns across the country, and this year's response to Friday Night 5G Lights proved it again,” said Jon Freier, Chief Operating Officer, T-Mobile. “We heard from nearly 2,500 schools hoping to fix things like aging bleachers, outdated lights and worn turf, and while each application reflected a unique community, they all shared a common thread — pride, need and a community ready to rally behind their team.”

Behind every finalist is a community story — something Friday Night 5G Lights ambassador and three-time Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes knows well from his own small-town football roots.

“Friday nights can bring an entire town together,” Mahomes said. “I grew up seeing how much high school football means to families, students and communities, and these 40 schools are carrying that same energy. Now it’s on their communities to rally, vote and help them keep moving forward.”

Meet the Top 40 Division Finalists

The finalists were selected based on community impact, need, creativity, school pride, social media participation and overall community engagement. Together, they represent small-town schools across the country seeking upgrades that would improve safety, accessibility, student opportunity and community connection.

East

- Smith Vocational & Agricultural High School, Northampton, Mass.
- South Caldwell High School, Hudson, N.C.
- Dalton McMichael High School, Mayodan, N.C.
- Sussex County Technical School, Sparta, N.J.
- Pleasant Valley High School, Brodheadsville, Pa.
- Homer-Center Jr/Sr High School, Homer City, Pa.
- Kingstree High School, Kingstree, S.C.
- Cosby High School, Cosby, Tenn.
- South Pittsburg High School, South Pittsburg, Tenn.
- Buffalo Gap High School, Swoope, Va.

Midwest

- Perry High School, Perry, Iowa
- Princeville High School, Princeville, Ill.
- Riley High School, South Bend, Ind.
- Baldwin High School, Baldwin City, Kan.
- Bridgeport High School, Bridgeport, Mich.
- Maple Lake High School, Maple Lake, Minn.
- Ash Grove High School, Ash Grove, Mo.
- McClain High School, Greenfield, Ohio
- Lennox High School, Lennox, S.D.

- Menasha High School, Menasha, Wis.

South

- Loachapoka High School, Auburn, Ala.
- Dora High School, Dora, Ala.
- Columbia High School, Lake City, Fla.
- Booker T. Washington High School, Pensacola, Fla.
- Berrien High School, Nashville, Ga.
- Covington High School, Covington, La.
- Long Beach High School, Long Beach, Miss.
- Natchez High School, Natchez, Miss.
- Hamshire-Fannett High School, Hamshire, Texas
- University High School, Waco, Texas

West

- Gila Ridge High School, Yuma, Ariz.
- La Quinta High School, La Quinta, Calif.
- El Diamante High School, Visalia, Calif.
- Mountain View High School, Loveland, Colo.
- Skyline High School, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Lakeland High School, Rathdrum, Idaho
- Redmond High School, Redmond, Ore.
- Carbon High School, Price, Utah
- Lakeside High School, Nine Mile Falls, Wash.
- Hanford High School, Richland, Wash.

How to Vote, Rally Support and Help Schools Win

Phase 1: Top 40 Division Finalist Voting

Starting today, Oct. 8, through Oct. 25, fans nationwide can vote once per day for their favorite Division Finalist at FridayNight5GLights.com or through the T-Life app, with a valid mobile phone number. The school with the most votes in each division— West, Midwest, South and East — will be named a Division Champion

Each Division Champion will receive $250,000, a Gronk Fitness gym upgrade valued at $90,000 and “The Big Deal” Student Leadership Award, valued at $5,000, recognizing a student selected by the school for helping lead and inspire their community’s Friday Night 5G Lights contest efforts.

As fans get ready to vote, Friday Night 5G Lights ambassador and four-time Super Bowl champion Rob “Gronk” Gronkowski is encouraging communities to bring the energy.

“This is where the competition really heats up,” Gronkowski said. “Forty schools, four divisions, $250,000 for each divisional winner and a shot at the $1 million grand prize field upgrade — that’s big-time Friday night energy. These schools have already shown amazing spirit, and now it’s time for their communities to show up and vote. Every vote counts, and I can’t wait to see how they rally together for this next round.”

Phase 2: Top 4 Division Champion Voting

The Top 4 Division Champions — one from each division— will be announced on Oct. 29 and advance to the final voting round. During the final round, fans can vote once per day from Oct. 29 through Nov. 8 to help decide the grand prize winner. One school will take home the ultimate prize: a $1 million home field upgrade and an epic tailgate celebration. The grand prize winner will be announced on Nov. 12.

More Ways to Rally Support

Finalists can also continue showing their school spirit on social media by tagging their school and @TMobile and using #FN5GL and #Entry. Schools have the opportunity to earn bonus votes by completing Spirit Week Challenges, including showing off T-Mobile’s signature magenta and sharing why their school and community deserve to win. Weekly rankings will be posted on FridayNight5GLights.com, giving communities a chance to track progress and rally support.

Fans can also get in the game through the Friday Night 5G Lights digital experience, where they can pose with Gronk in augmented reality, watch blooper highlights and explore the action under the bright lights from their phone.

T-Mobile also plans to recognize standout schools through Spirit Spotlight Awards, providing an additional $5,000 in funding to six non-finalist schools that brought their best stories to life through video and social media, to be announced on Oct. 29.

One finalist will also receive the T-Mobile Employee Fan Favorite Award, a $25,000 cash prize awarded to the school with the

most T-Mobile employee fan support.

And the impact is already reaching far beyond the Top 40. Through T-Mobile's $5K Fridays sweepstakes, 1,000 schools nationwide each scored $5,000 — totaling $5 million in funding to support upgrades that matter most to their students and communities. Whether it's new athletic gear, refreshed learning spaces, improved facilities or spirit-building projects, schools are turning Friday night excitement into real improvements this season.

Championing Small-Town America

T-Mobile is committed to helping people stay connected wherever they live — and Friday Night 5G Lights is one piece of T-Mobile's broader mission to connect and invest in communities across the country.

Through programs like Hometown Grants and Project 10Million, T-Mobile is helping bridge the digital divide and support community-led projects that help small towns thrive.

T-Mobile is also expanding broadband choice through T-Mobile 5G Home Internet, T-Mobile Business Internet and SuperBroadband, and T-Mobile Fiber — bringing fast, reliable connectivity options to small towns, rural communities, businesses and schools. And with T-Satellite with Starlink, T-Mobile is helping connect people in some of the hardest-to-reach places.

With initiatives like Friday Night 5G Lights, T-Mobile continues to amplify small-town voices, celebrate community pride and showcase what's possible with America's Best Network.

Learn more and keep tabs on the competition at FridayNight5GLights.com.

Follow the T-Mobile Newsroom on X and Instagram to catch the latest company updates.

About T-Mobile

As the supercharged Un-carrier, T-Mobile US, Inc. (NASDAQ: TMUS) is powered by an award-winning nationwide 5G Advanced network that connects more people, in more places, than ever before. With T-Mobile's unique value proposition of best network, best value and best experiences, the Un-carrier is redefining connectivity and fueling competition while continuing to drive the next wave of innovation in wireless, broadband and beyond. Headquartered in Bellevue, Wash., T-Mobile provides services through its subsidiaries and operates its flagship brands, T-Mobile, Metro by T-Mobile and Mint Mobile. For more information, visit https://www.t-mobile.com.

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