SECONDARY INTRA-SCHOOL/LEVEL 1 RESOURCE

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

4 V 4 LIGHTNING RUGBY

Getting started

- Teams consist of four players. A Quarterback (QB) plus three Receivers on Offense and on Defense, three Defensive Backs and a Safety.
- Once the QB has picked up the ball and holds it at arm's length, they have 20 seconds to 'snap' the ball (move it backwards and towards their body before throwing). They then have a further five seconds to throw.
- Defenders mark one Receiver whilst the 'Safety' has 'zone coverage' – any Receiver that gets past their Defender is the Safety's responsibility.
- The Defense's Safety can 'Blitz' (running at the QB to tag or disrupt the pass) but must signal this attack by raising their arm and can only start seven yards away from the ball.
- The game is played in an area preferably 25 yards wide and 60 yards long with two 10-yard end zones within the 60-yard length.
- Cones mark a 5-yard line for the 'no-run zone' (where a ball can only be thrown and not given to and carried, by a Receiver).
- Only one forward pass is allowed from the QB to a Receiver. Players cannot pass the ball to a teammate.
- When an Offensive player has caught the ball, their teammates stand still. Any of the Defending team can now tag the ball-carrier.
- There are four attempts (called 'downs') to get to the half-way line otherwise the other team get the ball and start from their own 5-yard line.
- If the team with the ball is successful at moving the ball past the half-way line, then they get another four downs to attempt to score.
- A Touchdown = six points with a one point thrown conversion from the 5-yard line.

Quick introduction

Lightning Rugby is a non-contact 4v4 tag game of two 20 minute halves. It is faster and more intense than 5v5 American Flag Football. The aim of the game is to score a touchdown in eight downs.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL – 4 V 4 LIGHTNING RUGBY

Organising the game

- Games should be played for 20 minutes with a running (continuous) game-clock. Think about playing a 15 minute game with a running clock and add two minutes of 'real time' at the end of the game.
- After calling the 'two minute warning', the clock is stopped when the ball carrier is tagged or steps 'out-of-bounds' (steps on or over the side-line) and the clock is re-started on the following snap.
- The clock is not stopped for an incomplete pass.
- The game clock is stopped to allow each team one 'Time-Out' of 30 seconds for players to discuss tactics during the last two minutes.

Officiating

- Young people should officiate.
- Have two referees – one to blow the whistle and watch the Offense and the other to place the ball at the end of a play and to watch the Defense.
- Referees should be on opposite sides of the field of play.
- Agree on which fouls are five yard penalties and which ones are five yard penalties and/or a loss of down (loss of an attempt).
- Make sure everyone agrees before you start to play.

Keeping it fun

- Blitzing the QB can be very stressful therefore for inexperienced QBs either don't allow a 'blitz' or allow only one 'blitz' per half.
- To make sure everyone is involved, have a rule that says on a drive of four downs, every Receiver must catch the ball at least once (so one Receiver can catch it twice).
- Think how you can use this to the Offense's advantage!

Keep it safe

- Because this is a non-contact game, players must not jump into Receivers as they contest for a ball (pass interference).
- The ball carrier has right of way and cannot be stopped from running their route (no blocking).

Think inclusively

- For QBs who are wheelchair users or who have limited mobility, place a cone at a safe distance from, but in-line with, the QB so that if the Blitzer gets to the cone before the ball is thrown, the Blitz has been successful
- For QB's who may need extra time to process information do not allow players to blitz, or give them a throwing safety zone which the 'blitzer' cannot enter.
- Players on different teams of similar abilities can be matched up and only be tagged by each other.

Think Tactics

- As an Offense, think about how to move the Defense away from the Receiver getting the ball.
- On Defense, Defensive Backs are 1:1 marking (single coverage) – watch the player!
- The Safety is Zone coverage – watch the ball!
- Think carefully about when the Safety should Blitz the QB.

Spirit of the Games: *Excellence through Competition*

RESPECT

QBs should respect their team mates and never show their disappointment when a Receiver drops a well thrown ball.

Big ideas

A female Yr11 student filmed, edited and produced a video with a music soundtrack of the American Football Programme at her school with no staff help or involvement. This was entirely her own idea. It was used at the College's Sport Awards Evening.

Jacob, West Exe School

"It helps me with team-work because everyone has to work together or it won't go the way it's meant to."

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SECONDARY INTRA-SCHOOL/LEVEL 1 RESOURCE

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

5 V 5 END ZONE EXCITEMENT

Getting started

- Create an End Zone 10 yards deep x 20 yards across.
- Use cones or pitch markings that already exist.
- Mark a 5-yard line away from the goal line from which the QB can throw the ball.
- The Team with the ball huddles to discuss who the Primary and Secondary Receivers are (who gets the ball first or second?).
- The Offense lines-up next to the QB as with a normal snap and then runs into the End Zone.
- The QB can move around the throwing area but must not cross the 5-yard line before throwing the ball.
- Each Team's QB has alternate throws into the End Zone. A successful catch is worth six points.
- If the Defense bats the ball down, they score one point. If they catch the ball (an 'interception') it is worth two points.

Quick introduction

End Zone Excitement is 5-a-side non-contact game. Each team has five alternate attempts to score a Touchdown from the 5-yard line (much like a penalty shoot-out in football). The ball can only be thrown into and caught in the End Zone. Running plays are not allowed.

Keep it safe

- This is a non-contact game. Discuss what would be a fair interception.
- When planning the play, QBs should make sure some players run towards the sides of the End Zone rather than everyone running into the middle.

Think tactics

Teams on Offense should think about how to 'move' the Defense away from the Primary Receiver to increase their chances of catching the ball.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL – 5 V 5 END ZONE EXCITEMENT

Organising the game

- Teams could have up to 10 players as long as there are only four Offensive and five Defensive players in the End Zone on any given play.
- When picking teams, match players according to their experience, height and athletic ability.
- Defending players should only mark the Offensive player they have been given.
- The Safety on Defense can mark any player.
- This is based on a one point conversion after a Touchdown in a normal 5v5 game.

Officiating

- Let two young people officiate. One is the Line Official positioned at the back corner of the end zone watching the Defense.
- The other is the Referee, positioned diagonally opposite and in line with the goal line, watching the QB and Offense.
- The front Official watches for the following fouls:
  - The QB stepping over the 5-yard line before throwing.
  - The QB throwing the ball after seven seconds of calling the snap.
  - Any player making a movement before the ball is snapped on 'Hutt' in the sequence of 'Down, Set, Hutt'.
- Both Officials watch for the following fouls: 'Pass Interference' – Defenders must not stop an Offensive player catching a ball
- Deliberate contact (pushing or holding) by either Offense or Defense – this is a non-contact game!

Keeping it fun

- Allow half a point for any Offensive player that touches the ball in the End Zone.
- Reduce the Defensive Team by removing the Safety to making it a 4v4 match-up in the End Zone.
- Balls can be thrown low and caught just as well as thrown high!

Think inclusively

- QBs who have limited throwing ability can set up at a distance, appropriate to their throwing ability, from the end zone.

Spirit of the Games: *Excellence through Competition*

Communicate effectively with your team and support each other under pressure – no-one wants to lose a game!

Katie, Exmouth Community College

"It has given me great friends that I would otherwise not have met or considered befriending."

Big ideas

A couple of Yr12 boys, without adult help, created a Facebook page for their school's American Football Programme. By using social media they promoted the fun and excitement of playing American Football in a school.

A correct interception attempt by yellow.

An incorrect interception attempt by yellow.

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SECONDARY INTRA-SCHOOL/LEVEL 1 RESOURCE

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

ULTIMATE FOOTBALL

Quick introduction

This is just like Ultimate Frisbee with teams between five to eight players. Teams have four downs (attempts) to score and can throw the ball as many times as they like during a down (backwards or forwards). But if the ball is dropped, intercepted or caught by a member of the other team, possession changes. A touchdown is worth six points.

Getting started

- The field should be 20 yards wide x 25 yards long but can be larger or smaller depending on the size of teams with the number of downs adjusted accordingly.
- Set-up end zones between 5-10 yards deep.
- Players line-up next to the QB and run into a position, catch the ball and then throw the ball to a member of their team.
- If the pass is incomplete, they start their next down from that point.
- Teams cannot score on the first two downs and therefore must move the ball carefully forward.
- Players can only take two steps with the ball. Extra steps after a catch is 'running' and incurs one point penalty.

Keep it safe

- Make sure players have an area to run in so that the team stays spread out.
- Do not encourage or allow everyone to chase after the same ball or all run into the same area.
- Stress that this is a non-contact game!

Think tactics

Players need to think about where the space is and not just 'follow the ball'.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL – ULTIMATE FOOTBALL

Organising the game

- Teams do not wear tag belts for this game. It is about finding space to catch in or intercepting a pass.
- Think about other rules that may apply to this game – what about 'blocking' or 'jumping into a player' to make an interception?
- This is a fast and intense game. Decide on how long you think it is best to play – for example, two 10 minute halves.

Officiating

- Let young people officiate. Have two referees, one either side of the playing area or one at the side and one actually in the playing area.
- Penalties are: running with the ball, jumping into another player or deliberate contact (pushing).

Keeping it fun

- Make sure everyone gets to catch and throw the ball.
- Players must look out for and look after each other – including the opposition!

Think inclusively

- Ensure each team member touches the ball prior to a touchdown.
- Safety zones can be included within the area to allow students with physical or intellectual impairments to take part in the game.
- On every four downs, the ball must be passed to the player in this area. Defensive players cannot enter this area, Offensive players can.

Spirit of the Games: *Excellence through Competition*

Don't let the excitement of the game cloud your judgement or emotions. Play fair and look after each other.

Big ideas

Two female Yr12 Media students who also played on the Programme wrote, edited and took photographs for an article in the school newspaper. This was sent out with the town's local newspaper – The Exmouth Journal.

Phoebe, Exmouth Community College

"The great thing about American Football is that there are many different elements to it which set it aside from most sports. So there are many different ways in which you can participate in this epic sport."

A legal interception

An illegal interception

An illegal block

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