WHY AMERICAN FOOTBALL

What are the benefits of playing my sport?

American Football is a sport that has historically promoted academic achievement, personal betterment, community engagement and excellence in athletic ability, regardless of gender, ability or disability. The sport is imbued philosophically and structurally, from grass-roots to the NFL, with the quintessential British value of 'fair play' – a perfect sport for schools! American Football is an inclusive team invasion game.

TOP Tip!

Youngsters that may have under-developed throwing, catching or running skills can make a full playing contribution to a team (for example, being a defensive player with the ability to tag a ball-carrier). For example, at Exmouth Community College, students with limited mobility (prosthetic limb/cerebral palsy) integrated fully into teams as quarterbacks. Furthermore, as a game of 'set plays' it makes playing the sport accessible and enjoyable for students with learning difficulties who don't need to develop any intuitive understanding. This can boost self-esteem and confidence. Overall, this 'new' game often results in 'discoveries' about abilities students never knew they had, that can encourage a new or renewed interest in sport.

British Paralympic Association
Department for Culture Media & Sport
change 4 life
Eat well Move more Live longer
SPORT ENGLAND
LOTTERY FUNDED
YOUTH SPORT TRUST

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Spirit of the Games:
Excellence through competition
How does your sport exemplify these values?

PASSION

With its thoughtful preparation of plays and its explosive action, this sport requires a passionate approach and can touch even the most disaffected youngsters.

RESPECT

The sport demands players follow instructions from both coaches and officials – players need to respect each other and be very disciplined to do well.

HONESTY

All sports have trick shots or trick plays but in American Football, such plays cannot be dishonest trick plays!

SELF BELIEF

The game can build confidence and self-belief in the least confident individual because it remains a simple game to play.

TEAMWORK

American Football can only work if it is played by a team working together – every player can make a difference to the result!

DETERMINATION

It takes hard work and determination to be good at this sport and because students do want to be good at this sport, it develops hard work and determination.

Priority competitions:

- **Name of Competition:** School Games 3v3 mini-game and Kicking Competition.
- **Age group/school year:** Year 5/6, mixed or single gender teams.
- **Intra/Inter Competition?** Inter School Competition (Level 2), County Final - Inter School Competition (Level 3).
- **Who runs it**: Run by teachers, Young Leaders, SGOs (with support from Touchdown Activators and Advisors (TDAA) and/or 'School Games Friendly' NL Community Club Youth Coaches.
- **How to enter:** Contact your SGO (and the Touchdown Competition Coordinator) who will coordinate a local interschool competition in the spring term.
- **When played:** Primary School Level 2 - spring term.*
  Secondary School Level 2 - summer term.*
- **Next steps after this competition:** Your SGO will then let the Touchdown Competition Coordinator know the winners who can opt to progress onto the NGB's Regional Championships held in the summer term* for primary schools and the autumn* term for secondary schools.

NB: *For the first year of the competitions, these timings are flexible.
Please contact schools@britishamericanfootball.org for further details and advice.

Where do young people go next (from school to club/community)?

Students can further their playing experience by joining one of the many National League Clubs that currently exist, for example the Hellingly Hounddogs: **www.hellinglyhounddogs.com**. This could be to continue playing flag football or it might be to transition into full-contact youth football and playing in the BAFA Competitions held during the summer.
www.su.nottingham.ac.uk/sports/sport/AmericanFootball/
Other opportunities through non-BAFA regulated pathways include the Bristol Academy (with links to the European Leagues), American Colleges and the NFL (through rare scholarships) and through private providers (affiliated and unaffiliated to the NGB), e.g. AFD (American Football Development limited) (**http://afdlimited.com/**).

Young Leader/Officials courses/qualifications available:

There is an information course for teachers and school staff:

- The Touchdown Football Induction Day (externally run). Age: 18+

There are three Awards and one Qualification for students:

- Touchdown Buddies Award (self-certificating). Age: 9-11 years
  Touchdown Team-mates (self-certificating). Age: 12-14 years
- Touchdown Respect Award (self-certificating). Age: 12-14 years, and a
- Touchdown Junior Flag Activator Certificate (externally verified). Age: 15+ years

Embracing the School Games Vision

Development Competitions provide an opportunity to engage all young people. Utilising the NGB format, consider:

- Identifying targeted participant groups (i.e. gender, physical activity levels, impairment groups).
- Using the STEP principles to condition activities.
- Consider how to reward success – what does it look like?

Relevant web links:

www.britishamericanfootball.org

Signposted competitions:

Further competition opportunities are planned to be developed either through established BAFA National League Competitions and/or through the developing Touchdown Football Programme. Competition rules vary; please contact **schools@britishamericanfootball.org** for more information.

Name of the competition
National League under 12s (Cadet) Flag Competitions
National League under 17s (Junior) Flag Competitions

Age Groups (year group/key stage)
Under 12s and Under 17s

Intra/Inter Competition?
Local, Regional and National Competitions

Who can run it?
BAFA through National League Community Clubs

How to enter
Schools should enter after registering with
www.britishamericanfootball.org

Name of competition
Touchdown Football's Regional Schools' Flag Championships. Open to boys and girls whose school has registered as a Touchdown School with registration forms accessed via
britishamericanfootball.org
The 3v3 competition will include two elements: a 3v3 mini-game and a separate Field-Goal Challenge competition.
The 5v5 flag plus competition will include three elements: 5v5 plus flag game, a Field Goal Challenge and a QB Challenge.

Age group/school year
Teams can be single or mixed sex and the current focused age group will be Yr5 and 6. Secondary age groups will be focused on Yr8, 9 and 10. Other age groups will be considered subject to demand.

Level/location
Winners of inter-school competitions will progress to county school competitions and then to regional championships (losing schools from School Games regional competitions will be allowed to enter Touchdown Regional competitions as 'Wild Card' entries).

Who runs it
Touchdown Competitions will be run by teachers at Lombardi or equivalent venues with volunteer Touchdown Activators and Advisors and School Game Friendly Community Club Youth Coaches.

How to enter
Further details available on request from
www.britishamericanfootball.org

When
The Competition is proposed to be held in the spring term for primary schools and the autumn term for secondary schools.
BAFA is also working to develop international pathways via the International School Sport Federation (ISF).
For older students moving onto HE, there are many universities that play in the BUCS Competition, for example Nottingham University:
www.su.nottingham.ac.uk/sports/sport/AmericanFootball/

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Competition Card

Primary or Secondary:

Primary

Name of competition:

3v3 mini-game and Kicking Competition

Age group:

Year 5 and 6

How to enter:

Via your local SGO

Tournament format:

- Competition winners will be for the two separate events (3v3 mini-game and Field Goal Challenge) and for the combined events (3v3 mini-game plus the Field Goal Challenge) thus there will be two event winners (FGC and 3v3) and one overall competition winner (FGC and 3v3 combined).
- Appropriate local and regional venues.

Relevant web links:

Please refer to 'Touchdown 3v3 Competition Rules for Primary Schools' and 'Touchdown 5v5 Rules for Secondary Schools' available at:

www.britishamericanfootball.org/coach-and-teach/teaching-football#.WVYLWojyvIU

Simple rules:

- The game is played on a grass, astro, rubber-crumb pitch or sports flooring (called a 'field') 10 yards x 30 yards.
- Teams should have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 7 players of mixed or single gender.
- The Offense has a Quarterback (QB) and two Receivers (one of whom could be a Running-back).
- The Defense has two Defensive Backs and a Safety.
- Teams wear the same coloured shirts or skirts, with flag belts (Velcro belts with two flags on them, are the recommended type).
- Played with a ball appropriate to the ability of the Offensive Team i.e. foam (available from Youth Sport Direct) or mini-football, but not the larger TDY size.
- Use cones to mark a half-way line, goal line and end zone.
- After hand-shakes and a coin toss that will give the winner the opportunity to have first possession or first possession at the start of the second half, the QB calls the snap to start the first of the four downs (or 'attempts').
- The team with the ball (the Offense) has four downs to score.
- The Offense must move the ball past the half-way line or have had three downs in their own half, before attempting to score.
- If a player is able to run past a defender and reaches past the half-way line on the first or second down, they should 'step-out' across the sideline at a distance they feel is advantageous for their team to (a) take a second down (i.e. close to the half-way line) or (b) at a distance from the goal-line that does not make scoring difficult (i.e. an attempt to score from the goal line is easy to defend).
- If the ball hits the ground as an incomplete pass (not caught) or caught and dropped (fumble), play starts from the original spot of the throw. If the ball is intercepted by the Defence before touching the ground it is a 'turn-over' and loss of possession by the Offense. The Defence (now with the ball) re-starts play at the spot of the turn-over.
- The ball carrier has 'right of way' and must not be blocked in their run by a defender standing in their way.
- The ball carrier cannot stop a defender tagging them by knocking their hand away (this is called flag guarding).
- There is no 'Blitzing' by the Safety in the 3v3 mini-game.
- The QB cannot run with the ball (no 'Quarterback sneaks').
- To start a play, the QB shouts 'Down, Set, Hutt!'
- A Touchdown is worth 6 points, and there are no 'extra points'. Points gained during the 3v3 mini-game are added to the points achieved in the Field Goal Challenge.
- Different players to those taking part in the mini-game make up teams of 5 for the Field Goal Challenge.
- Teams alternatively kick a Touchdown Kicking ball (available from Youth Sport Direct) from 10 yards away from the cross-bar of a goal-shaped area marked with cones (the kicking point is 5 yards from the end of the 5 yard 'leg' of the 'up-rights' into an area 5 yards square).
- Within this area, 2-yard boxes are marked out with cones that carry different point values. Every ball that lands cleanly in a box (not on the cones) scores those points for the team. Teams have two rounds of kicking.

Roles for young people:

Young people can take the roles of setting up and checking the playing area for hazards, officiating and keeping score. The Touchdown Teams-mates, Touchdown Respect Awards along with the Touchdown Junior Flag Activator Certificate and the new AQA Technical Award in Sport qualification will provide young people of various ages with the skills, knowledge and ability to fulfil these roles successfully.

How can depth in competition through extra teams be achieved ?

The Competition format is based on two separate 'mini-competitions': a 3v3 (or 5v5plus) game, a kicking (field-goal) challenge and (for secondary schools only) a Quarterback Challenge. Individual students cannot compete in more than one of the sub-sets of the competitions (e.g. a player in the 3v3 team cannot also be the kicker in the kicking competition), thus increasing the inclusion opportunities for both team and individual players.

Think inclusively!

The game allows boys and girls to play in separate or mixed teams. The quarterback position is very adaptable for wheelchair users or a person with limited or very limited mobility.
The field size can be altered for the competitions in agreement with the organisers and the NGB, where circumstances dictate.
Because American Football is new to most young people the lack of knowledge takes away advantages of skill or knowledge that may exist in other sports and therefore creates increased inclusion opportunities and greater 'fairness' amongst competitors.

The route from here to County Final - Inter School Competition (Level 3)

American Football is still in its development phase with an intention that following local inter-school competitions winners can progress to county/regional events or festivals, under the auspices of CSP and LOCs. Local secondary schools can also opt to enter the National Schools Touchdown American Flag Football Competition in the autumn and/or the National Leagues Flag Football Competitions in the summer.

How can regularity be achieved?

School Games Organisers will offer events and festivals, as will a small number of School Games Friendly National League Community Clubs and private providers. The Touchdown Football Programme fully supports and encourages this type of engagement.