

**Name/Title:** Football Downs

**Purpose of Event:** To familiarize the students with the use of open space and the concept of four downs in football.

**Activity cues:** [Football Throwing Cues](#)

**Prerequisites:** Grip, passing and catching a football, routes, make and run simple plays.

**Materials Needed:** One soft football (nerf football works great), 3 cones, one bean bag for each group of three students.

### Description of Idea

Divide the class into groups of 3 (quarterback, receiver and defender). Two on offense and one on defense. Set out three cones, each 10 yards apart. Starting at the first cone, have the offense place the ball on a bean bag which represents the line of scrimmage.

From there, the offense runs their play that they made up with the receiver running to an open space. The quarterback throws the ball to the receiver once they are in an open space. If caught the receiver places the ball at the spot where they caught the ball. They now move the bean bag up to where the receiver caught the ball. If the bean bag is past the first cone on the field, they get another first down or four more tries. If the bean bag is not to the first cone, it becomes second down and so on.

If the pass is not caught, the bean bag doesn't get to be moved up and the ball comes back to the line of scrimmage for the next down, or try, from the same place. I explain to the students that they get four downs (or tries) to get the ball to the next cone.

If they do not get the ball to the next cone by completing the passes in four tries or if the defender intercepts the ball, the defender and one of the offensive players then become the offense and start from the first cone again. Have children rotate positions so that everyone gets to play all three positions. A touchdown is scored if the offense moves the ball past the last of the three cones.

**Variations:**

Allow skilled groups to vary the distance between cones.

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Submitted by **Natalie Ross** who teaches at Westbrook-Walnut Grove Elementary School in Westbrook, MN. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 11/24/2002.**

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