



# The Mini Page

Betty Debnam, Founding Editor and Editor at Large



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## Following Football



# Are You Ready?



Does your family have a favorite football team? As football season heats up, The Mini Page takes a close look at how this popular American sport is played. Use this issue to guide you as you watch a game.

### What is football?

Football is a complex team sport played in every corner of the United States. It is played by kids and adults alike. Many people begin playing football as kids and later play in high school.



The football is an oval-shaped ball filled with air. Even though it is made of cowhide leather, a football is often referred to as a “pigskin.” Footballs have a set of laces sewn in to make them easier to grip and throw.

Thousands of athletes receive **scholarships\*** to play in college. Many U.S. colleges and universities, large and small, have football programs that represent their schools. Is there is a college team near you?

**\*A scholarship is an amount of money given to pay for a student’s education. Some scholarships cover all costs of school, while others pay for only part of them.**



photo courtesy Library of Congress

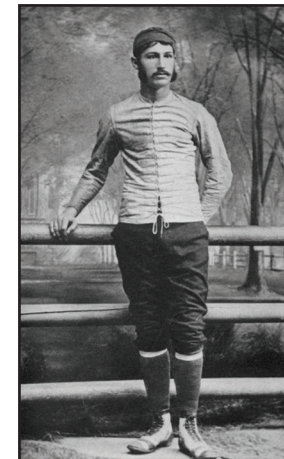
The 1914 Washington & Jefferson College football team played against Rutgers University at the Polo Grounds in New York City on Nov. 28, 1914. Notice their uniforms. How are they different from today’s uniforms? These players might have worn helmets, but they were not required for college players until 1939.

### Football’s origins

The first “football” games were played in the mid-1800s by a number of colleges in the United States and Canada. These versions of the game were often similar to soccer or rugby. There was no passing, only running and tossing the ball.

In 1880, a coach and former player, Walter Camp, helped to set up many of the rules that are still a part of the sport today, including 11 men on the field, taking turns on offense, first downs and the line of scrimmage. About 25 years later, the forward pass was added to the game.

Professional football soon became popular in many larger towns and cities, but college football was popular throughout the nation.



**Walter Camp** played football at Yale University in Connecticut. Early players didn’t use helmets or pads. Hundreds of players were killed playing the sport, and it was nearly outlawed. Camp’s rules helped make it safer for players.

# How the Game Is Played

In football, the **offense** tries to put the ball in the opponent's **end zone** (6 points) or kick it through the **goal posts** (3 points). The **defense** tries to prevent the offense from doing so.

To move closer to the end zone, a team has four chances, or **downs**, to move the ball 10 yards. If the offense moves the ball at least 10 yards, it gains a new set of downs.

The **line of scrimmage** (SKRIH-mej) is an imaginary line where the football is placed. The offense lines up on one side, and the defense is on the other.

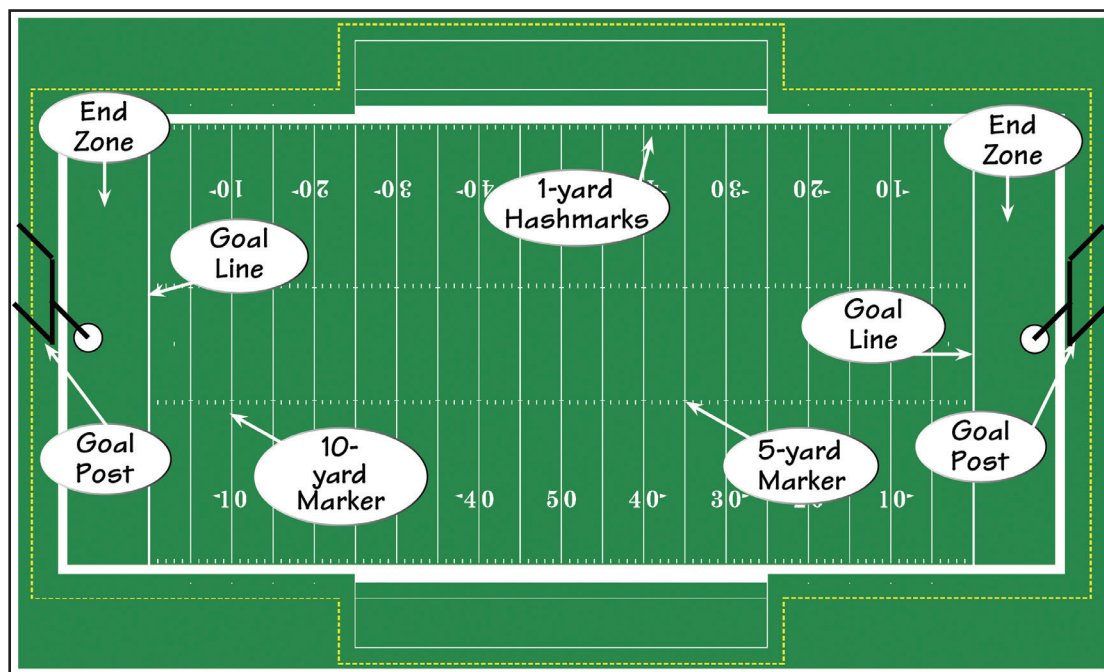


photo by Randy Lewis

Hundreds of thousands of fans attend college football games each week during the season. The University of Nebraska's Memorial Stadium has been sold out for 333 straight games, dating back to 1962.

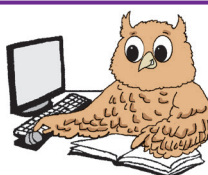
## Scoring

- **Touchdown** — A team scores 6 points if the ball reaches the opponent's end zone.
- **Extra point** — After a touchdown, a ball kicked through the goal posts adds 1 point.
- **2-point conversion** — After a touchdown, a team may try to move

the ball into the end zone again for 2 extra points, instead of kicking it.

- **Field goal** — The offensive team may kick the ball through the goal posts for 3 points.
- **Safety** — If the defense tackles an opposing player in his own end zone, it is given 2 points.

## Ready Resources



The Mini Page provides ideas for websites, books or other resources that will help you learn more about this week's topics.

### On the Web:

- nflrush.com
- bit.ly/1rLluQW

### At the library:

- "Eyewitness: Football" by James Buckley Jr.
- "Play Football Like a Pro" by Matt Doeden
- "All About Football" by George Sullivan



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## Football

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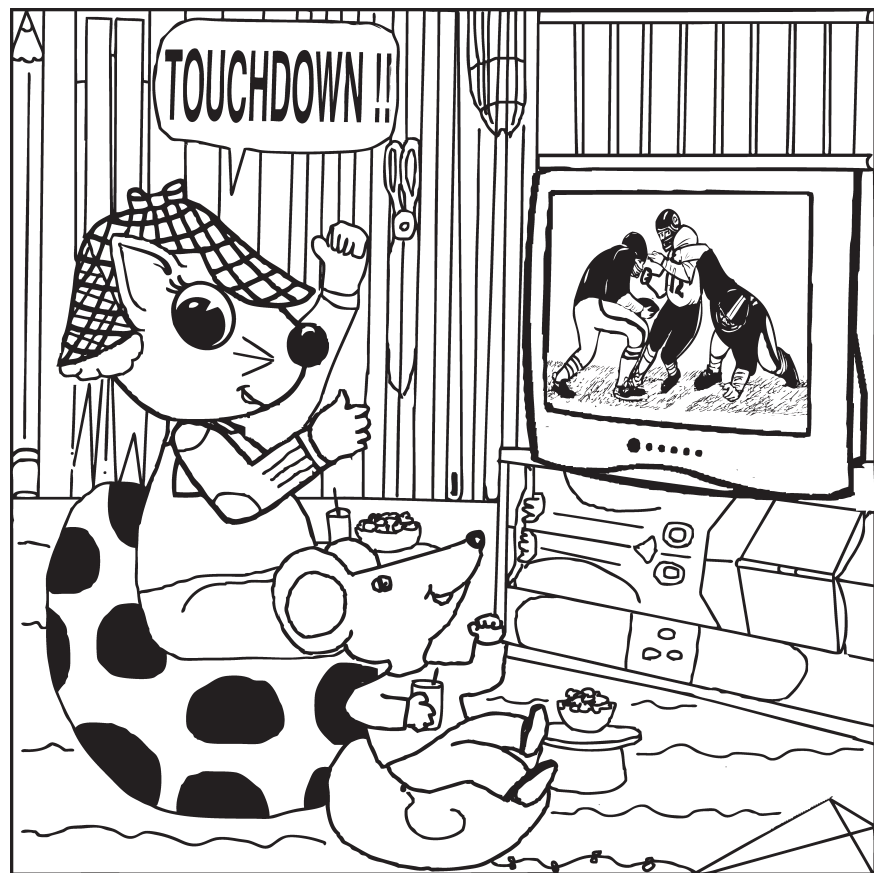
Words that remind us of football are hidden in the block above. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find: AMERICAN, ATHLETE, COLLEGE, DEFENSE, DOWNS, FOOTBALL, HELMET, OFFENSE, PLAYER, POINTS, QUARTERBACK, RUGBY, SCHOLARSHIP, SCRIMMAGE, SOCCER, SPORT, TEAM, TOUCHDOWN.



# Mini Spy

Mini Spy and Alpha Mouse are enjoying a great football game! See if you can find:

- kite
- pencil
- broom
- scissors
- bandage
- needle
- book
- word MINI
- owl
- sock
- ladder
- letter E
- ice cream cone
- question mark



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# Rookie Cookie's Recipe Peach Berry Smoothie

## You'll need:

- 2 cups fresh peaches (with or without peel)
- 1 cup strawberries
- 8 ounces low-fat plain yogurt
- 1 cup fruit juice (any flavor)
- 1 cup ice cubes

## What to do:

1. Wash and cut up fruit into chunks.
2. Place all ingredients in large blender.
3. Process until smooth and creamy.

Makes 4 servings.

*You will need an adult's help with this recipe.*

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# Meet Megan Fox



photo © 2014 by Paramount Pictures

Megan Fox stars as April in the new "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" movie. She has modeled and acted in several TV shows and movies, including two "Transformers" films and the "Holiday in the Sun" video.

Megan, 28, was born in Rockwood, Tennessee. She began taking acting and dance classes when she was 5 years old. She was in her elementary school chorus. When she was 10, she moved with her family to St. Petersburg, Florida. She has one older sister.

She enjoys reading comic books and playing video games. She loves animals and has two goats, a dog and a cat.

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**Gus Goodsport's Supersport**



**Height:** 6-4  
**Birthdate:** 10-30-1993  
**Hometown:** Honolulu, Hawaii

# Marcus Mariota

The name Marcus Mariota is already showing up in a lot of record books. The junior quarterback for the University of Oregon Ducks achieved many feats in his first two seasons, including twice winning first-team all-league honors from the Pacific 12 Conference.

In 2013, Marcus became the first Duck to amass 4,000 yards of total offense in a single season. His 77 career touchdowns at Oregon are tied with the school's all-time mark. In just two seasons, this mighty Duck already owns the program's record for most rushing yards by a quarterback, with 1,467. For his hard work on the field and off, Mariota's Oregon teammates voted him the team's most inspirational player.

More awards and honors likely await Mariota as his junior campaign gets underway. He is considered an early front-runner for the Heisman Trophy, college football's highest individual award.



**Mighty Funny's**

# Mini Jokes

All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?

**Nancy:** How can you make the odd number seven an even number?

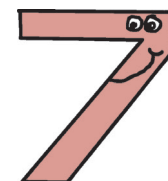
**Ned:** Take away the "s"!



**Nora:** When do 2 and 2 make more than 4?  
**Nelson:** When they make 22!

**Nuala:** What number is bigger when you turn it upside down?

**Nelly:** 6 — it becomes 9!



# Who's Who on the Field

There are three units, or groups, on each football team.

**Offense:** The offense tries to get the ball into the end zone for a touchdown.

**Defense:** The defense works to stop the other team's offense.

**Special teams:** These units come on the field for kicking plays: kickoffs, punts and field goal attempts.

There are always 22 players on a football field at once — 11 for each team. Each player has a specific job to do.

In a game program, players' names may be followed by abbreviations for their positions. Some abbreviations may be used for several players.

For example, OL means "offensive lineman" and DL means "defensive lineman."

## By the numbers

A college football player's number may help you identify his position. Professional numbering is similar.

- **1-49:** Backs (quarterback, running back, wide receiver, cornerback, safety, linebacker)

- **50-59:** Centers
- **60-69:** Guards
- **70-79:** Tackles (offensive tackle, defensive tackle)

- **80-99:** Ends (tight end, defensive end)

- **40s and 90s:** Kickers and punters



Next week, The Mini Page finds out all about 3-D printing.

## Offense

- **Center (C, OL)** — the first person to touch the football; *hikes*, or snaps, the ball through his legs to the quarterback; blocks defensive linemen.

- **Guard (G, OL)** — left and right guards block defensive linemen to protect the quarterback and create "holes" for running backs to run through.

- **Tackle (OT, OL)** — left and right tackles block defenders for running

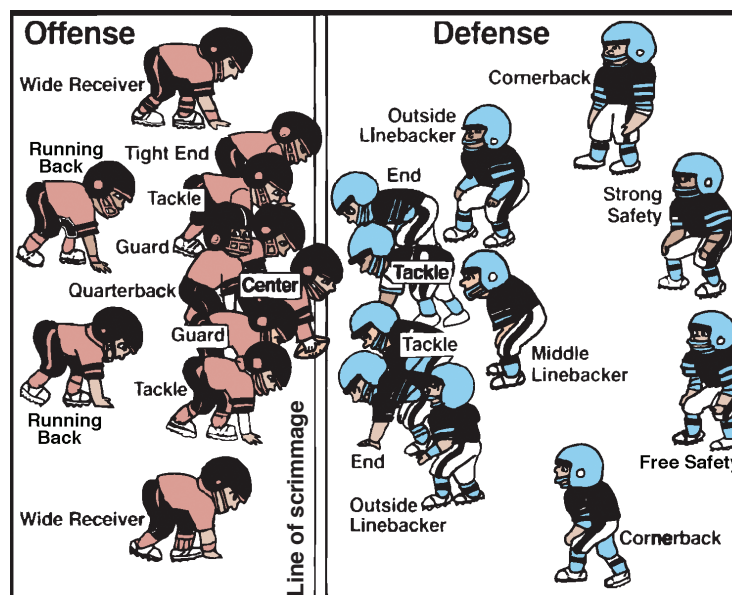
backs; also responsible for protecting the quarterback's "blind side" — an area behind the thrower where he can't see.

- **Tight end (TE)** — blocks like an offensive lineman on running plays; can also catch passes.

- **Wide receiver (WR)** — often very fast and able to catch passes far down the field.

- **Running back (RB)** — takes a "hand-off" from the quarterback, or may go out for a pass.

- **Quarterback (QB)** — the leader of the offense; takes the snap from the center and may hand off the ball to a running back or throw a pass; may also run with the ball.



## Defense

- **Tackle (DT, DL)** — two tackles line up to the left and right of the football; they rush the quarterback, knock down passes or try to slow down a running back.

- **Ends (DE, DL)** — two ends line up outside the defensive tackles; they rush the quarterback and try to force runners to the middle of the field.

- **Linebacker (LB)** — "inside" or "middle" linebackers are behind

the linemen; "outside" linebackers move beyond the ends; they may *blitz*, or run, into the backfield to disrupt the offense's play; also defend short passes.

- **Cornerback (CB)** — two cornerbacks defend the left and right edges of the defensive formation; usually responsible for guarding the wide receivers.

- **Safety (S)** — one or two safeties are the last line of defense; "free" safeties guard areas down the field against long passes and running plays; "strong" safeties cover tight ends and help stop runners.

## Special teams positions do special jobs

- **Place kicker (PK)** — kicks the ball off a tee to begin the game or after a score; also kicks an extra point after a touchdown, or a field goal for 3 points.

- **Punter (P)** — kicks the ball to the other team on fourth down if the offense fails to get a first down and the ball is too far away to try for a field goal.

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