**Penny Football** Grades 3-6

A lead-up game that promotes participation among all students.

**Objective:** For the offensive team to score as many points as possible by successfully getting the pennies across the opposing team’s goal line. It promotes students working together in small groups, helps them grasp the concept of strategy, and provides an opportunity to introduce, discuss or review terms such as ***offense, defense, huddle, goal line, hike*** and ***quarterback***.

**Equipment:**

* Enough cones to mark the boundaries for 2-3 playing fields (6 cones per field)
* Enough flag belts with flags for the entire class
* 4-5 scrimmage vests for each team (preferably a different color for each team)
* pennies

**Setup:** Each field should be setup with a cone in each corner. In addition, I place two cones at mid-field to better define the sidelines. The approximate size of the playing field should be 25 x 40 yards.

 40 yards

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**Description:**

* Setup teams of 4-5 students each
* The two teams playing each other will lineup on opposite ends of the field.
* The first quarterback for each team is designated by the teacher.
* The team on offense is given 5 pennies.
* The offensive team gets into a huddle and the quarterback distributes the pennies to team members anyway he/she chooses. (This is where “strategy” comes into play. The QB could distribute one penny to each player, give all five to one person, three to one player and two to another, etc.) – Before leaving the huddle, the offensive players should make fists with their hands so the opposing team doesn’t know which player(s) are actually holding the pennies.
* Meanwhile, the defensive team has an opportunity to form a huddle to discuss defensive strategy should they choose to do so.
* Both teams then lineup on their respective goal lines at the opposite ends of the field.



* The offensive captain calls out, “Are you ready?”

After the defensive team replies, “Yes!”

The quarterback yells, “Hike!”

* Each offensive player tries to run past the goal line at the other end of the field without having one of his/her flags pulled.
* Meanwhile, the defensive team runs toward the offensive team and tries to pull their flags.
* Whoever makes it past the goal line for the offensive team, without having his/her flags pulled, opens his/her hands to reveal the number of pennies.
* The total number of pennies that made it over the goal line is the score the offense earned on that play. (For example: If three players made it past the goal line and there was only one penny among them, then that team has earned 1 point.)
* The pennies are given to the other team’s designated captain and that team is now offense.
* The teams continue to alternate playing offense and defense. Each time a team takes possession of the pennies, a new quarterback will distribute them. (We normally establish a rotation before the game begins so everyone gets a turn.)
* The score is cumulative and the team with the highest score when time expires would be the winner.
* After 10-12 minutes, we have each team play another team. We may play as many as 3-4 games during one class period.

**Suggestions:**

* It may take a while to explain the game the first time. However, after that, it should be non-stop play.
* Encourage all teams to keep the “huddles” as brief as possible.
* Keep some extra pennies handy! As careful as the students may be, occasionally one gets lost.

**Safety:** Remind students to stay on their feet (no diving) and to only go after the flag (no grabbing clothing or holding on to a player).

**Wrap-up:**

We take a few minutes at the end of class to discuss strategies that were used. How did each quarterback distribute the pennies and what was his/her reasoning for doing so?

**Variation:** Do not use pennies and play so it is the number of flags that cross the goal line that were not pulled.