

THE MINIATURE FOOTBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION



# THE TWEAK

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE MFCA

MINIATUREFOOTBALL.ORG  
SPRING 2010

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A  
LEAGUE  
OF  
YOUR OWN

SOLITAIRE

LESSONS &  
INNOVATIONS  
IN BOARD BUILDING

GREAT LAKES  
BELTSVILLE BASH  
MID AMERICAMELEE

COACHES  
HOOP, BUTCH & STYX





## A Letter from MFCA Tweak Editor, Al Dunham

**L**ife is fickle. You just never know what is coming your way. When you're looking for a fastball, life throws a curve. Keep your eyes open for a curve, and life tosses a slider. Occasionally, you get a knuckleball thrown in just for good measure. If you decide to just sit back and watch, life tries to knock you down.

As many of you may or may not know, Matt Culp has had to take a leave from his duties in the MFCA. Just one of life's bean balls thrown in his direction. I'm sure Matt will bounce back someday, but until then there are a few holes that need filling. One is editor for the Tweak. As Matt's assistant for the last couple of years, I'm going to step up and take the bull by the horns. I can only hope that I can do justice to the magazine. It has been a labor of love for the both of us. We've spent many hours editing articles, proofreading, figuring out what articles we want in the next issue, proofreading, gathering pictures, proofreading, writing articles, and even more proofreading. It was always our goal to put out the best magazine that we possibly could. Matt did an incredible job, and we all owe him a debt of gratitude. As the new editor for the Tweak, I will do my best to ensure that the quality you have all expected for each issue shall continue.

The Tweak is not the only area of the MFCA that Matt has been involved in. He was heavily involved in organizing and running both MFCA conventions in Canton. He fabricated the M\*A\*S\*H signs, shirts and other props that made last years camp-in such a success. He worked the sign up tables, ran some of the skills competitions, and kept records of it all, including the officers meetings. While the rest of us were playing games and having fun, Matt was busy working non-stop. It takes a special person to dedicate so much of their time to this hobby. We are all fortunate to have had Matt available for the last 2 years. Doing all the grunt work it takes to keep the MFCA going is a thankless job. So I'm saying it now, Thank you, Matt Culp, for all the hard work you have done for this organization. The MFCA wouldn't be where it is today if it weren't for you.

Time stands still for no man, nor for any organization for that matter. We have to forge ahead. It's time for others to step forward and do their part to help out. The easiest thing to do is to do nothing. You can say that you've paid your dues, and you'll just let the others do the work. Well, if everyone felt that way the MFCA would come to a grinding halt. There would be



no Tweak, no convention, no skills competition..... nothing! I don't get paid anything for writing articles. Lynn doesn't get paid for running the chat board or for the conventions. Neither did Matt, Tim Young, Steve Martin, Ken Allen, Kelvin Lomax, or anyone else who has chipped in articles or helped run parts of the convention. We do what we do because we love this hobby. We want to see it expand and grow. But, we can't do it alone. This is your MFCA, and your Tweak. Volunteer to help out in any way that you can. The conventions coming soon, we'll need people to help keep everything running smoothly. The Tweak needs articles. Grab your keyboard and start writing. Don't just be in the MFCA, be a part of it!

# THE TWEAK

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE  
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Name	Points	Games Played
Corey Johnson	79	6
Kelvin Lomax	76	6
Jim Davis	68	6
Geno Hendricks	67	5
Joe Greco	64	7
Flynt Hendricks	54	5
Joel Pritchard	52	4
Andrew Stewart	43	4
Ed Scott	43	6
Adrian Baxter	39	4
Butch Carter	39	4
Ed Morgans	38	3

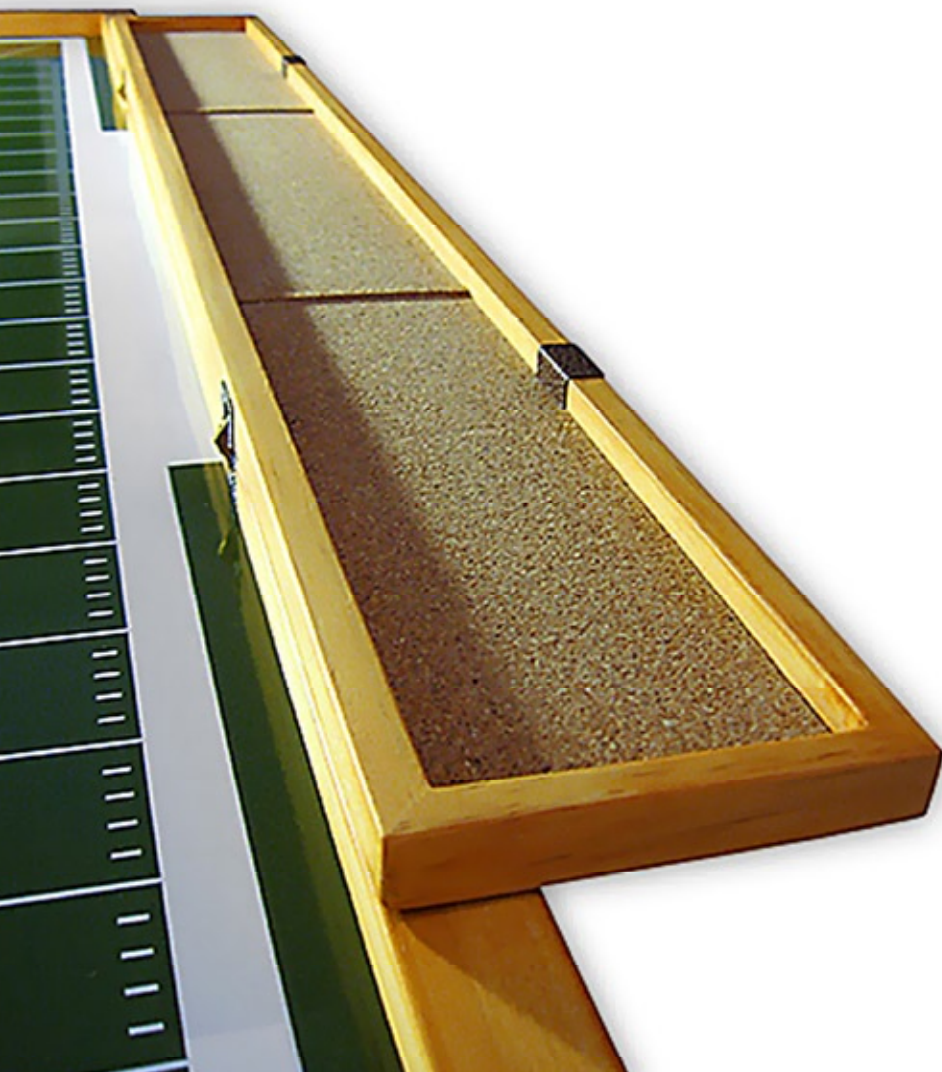
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# CUSTOM SHOWCASE

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM A CUSTOM BOARDMAKER OR EVEN YOURSELF

LESSONS & INNOVATIONS IN BOARD BUILDING



KEN TAMASHIRO  
TEAMS UP WITH  
ROLLERBOARDS

DAVID ROLLER & KEN TAMASHIRO





Ken Tamashiro has a soft spot for custom gameboards, actually, more like an addiction. His impressive collection of custom gameboards would make most coaches weak in the knees or tempt the most honest among us to contemplate staging a heist that would rival the Pink Panther. Ken's collection has been featured in several publications, including our very own Tweak magazine (Spring 07) and includes a custom EF and Subbuteo table with Bill Brent, a replica of Yankee Stadium with Reginald Rutledge and a 1940's Four-Season Ivy League Stadium with Chris Fields. So, it should come as no surprise that Ken was recently 'off the wagon' again - commissioning yet another custom miniature football gameboard with one of the newest entrants into the board making biz, David Roller of Rollerboards.

## Laying the Foundation

David Roller, custom board maker, had just posted a new gameboard in the photo gallery of the MFCA forum and had ended his February 2009 post asking, "Anyone have any suggestions for my next board? I need a creative muse..." Ken saw this post and just knew he had to respond. One month later the project would begin.

The Tweak followed Ken and David throughout their year long process. Ken says that, "[this] last year's collaboration with David was a great experience and we have some amazing photos and sketches to document the evolution of the Rollerboard from beginning to end." We hope their story will inspire DIY'ers as well as those of us who would like to commission a custom gameboard to push the envelope and embrace innovation. This article, in addition to showcasing Ken's newest fix for his EF addiction, is sprinkled with tips and advice from Roller that can be

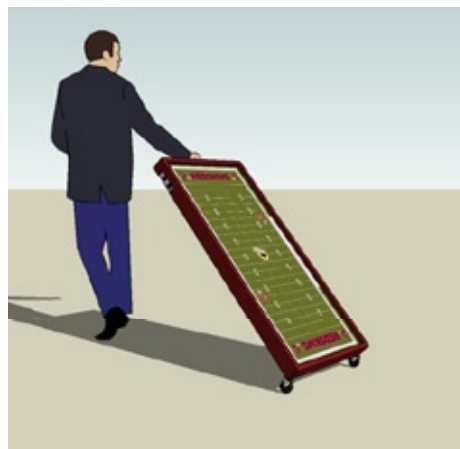
applied to any custom gameboard project.

## Initial Concept

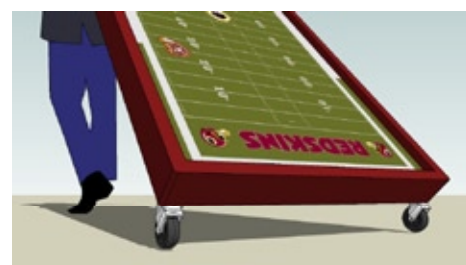
Ken's initial contact with David centered around his idea that Rollerboards could, "actually roll", says Roller. "Ken approached me in an email, asking if I had thought about using inline skate wheels mounted to the frame. He had a few gameboards that were at least 50 lbs and he thought that a rolling gameboard similar to wheeled luggage would be a great feature. He even suggested a slogan, 'Rollerboards are ready to Roll!' I loved his ideas and it really got me thinking". On March 19th, of 2009, Ken received the first sketches of the prototype "rolling Roller Board". He was still deciding what exactly he wanted for his collection so David did a sample of a Redskins field to get his juices flowing.

Roller proposed to reinforce the bottom frame edge and use fully rotating and removable casters along with a folding handle to provide the mobility Ken desired. Ken loved the idea and the illustrations.

"I pointed out to [David] that most MF'ers



Design graphic showing the rolling gameboard concept



Detail of the proposed multidirectional removable casters



The proposed gameboard shown with the casters removed and ready for play.

were not that fit or well dressed when they played," jokes Ken. "OK, the one in sweats could be National, but what about the other guy??" Ken liked the initial concept, but had not yet decided on the actual look of the gameboard. That would be the next phase.

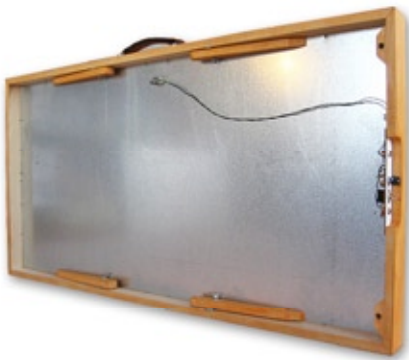
Ken goes on to say that the rolling concept, "is an effortless and stylish way to make an entrance at a tournament-whether you are pulling it through an airport or from the parking lot".

## Initial Design

About one week later Ken sent David his idea for the style and look of the gameboard. Ken says, "I wanted something really different from my 1940's field or my 1950's baseball/football stadium. The natural progression would be a gameboard to reflect the 1960's. I decided that the way to make this board really different was to break away from the painted box frame and use natural



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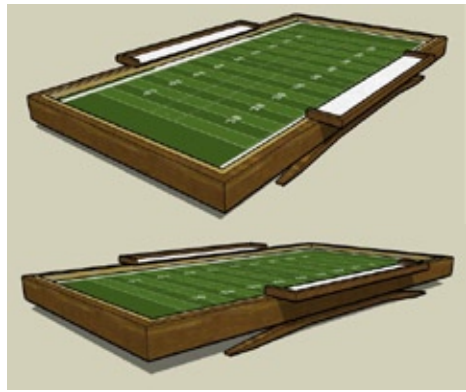


**Builder's Tip**  
*Establish the Envelope*

Will the gameboard be for your basement, the road, durability, fun, competition, etc? These issues should guide your decisions about the design. You may want the biggest board with all the bells and whistles, but do you really need them? If you love to run and play defense, a smaller board may be better than a larger board built for a pass happy open style of play. Additionally, you may want to go plain and simple, but if the league you play in demands more features, you won't be happy in the long run. These features need to be addressed so that you can plan your design accordingly.

wood to create a beautiful, functional piece of period furniture that would look good in the living room. My inspiration was the Modern Danish and Scandinavian furniture that was very popular in the late 50's and early 60's. David knew what I had in mind because he had collected some Scandinavian furniture."

The next day David sent Ken these first draft designs.  
Ken wanted the controls hidden so that



Proposed gameboard design showing folding trays and legs



Initial design drawing showing folding player trays in action

it gave the appearance of being all wood-including a fiberboard field.

**Field Graphics**

Ken's initial concept of a retro-styled, simple, versatile, and generic design that could be used for any team in any league was in need of a field.

Ken seriously considered two designs, which he ultimately rejected, before landing on the final image. One was a mostly brown vintage gaming table meant to look like inlaid wood. Says Ken, "I thought it looked great, but more like the late 19th or early 20th century. It didn't really match the timeless yet futuristic look of the danish modern style I was going for."

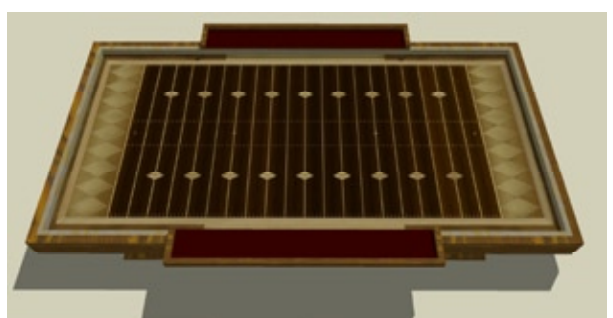
The runner-up design was a much greener field which David says was Scandinavian inspired. Ken really liked the way it looked without players but had some concerns about the diamond yard markers being too distracting.

**Builder's Tip**  
*Developing Field Graphics*

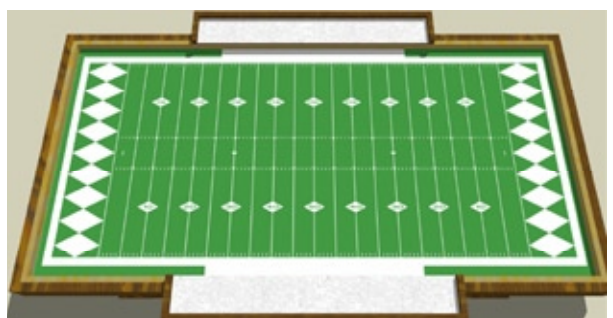
I develop all of my field graphics in the computer using Adobe Photoshop Elements. I scale the field dimensions from the NCAA and NFL's exact dimensions to fit onto a 2'x4' surface. All of the graphics need to be crisp, smooth and high resolution, at least 200 dpi or higher.

Once the design is complete, I send the file out to be printed by a sign shop who specializes in printing high resolution graphics onto adhesive vinyl.

Making the field graphics can be the most fun of the whole project so take your time, you'll be happier down the road.



One of the original field cover designs. The concept was to simulate wood inlay. The design was eventually rejected due to styling conflicts with the over-all concept



The second choice of the original field graphics. This design was based on a vintage 60's Scandinavian gaming table found at an antique shop.





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### Builder's Tip

#### Sizing the Gameboard

I use 2'x4' sheets of material as the basis for my gameboards. This isn't just because 2'x4' is the ideal size for a large gameboard. I use it because it's a size that is readily available and it matches up well when finding the other materials for the gameboard. Construction materials are usually available in 2' increments.

Even field covers are easy and cost effective to produce at this size. Finally, this size is able to be shipped without incurring the dreaded oversize freight surcharges and it can be fit into most automobiles.

The more you source your components locally, the more likely you might find an interested EF'er or at least a helping hand.

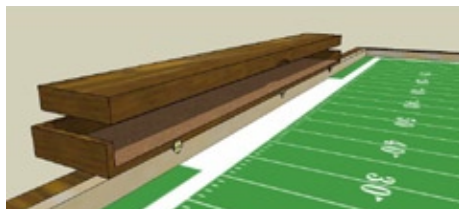
### Refining the Design

At this point Ken was still leaning toward the Scandinavian-inspired fiberboard field with the diamond decorations, but was starting to refine other aspects of the initial design. One of Ken's priorities was to have lots of sideline space for large squads so that he could separate the offense, defense and special teams for quick substitution, especially if the players were all wearing their dark or white uniforms. He also wanted space to accommodate supplies, tweaking tools and accessories. He suggested expanding the player trays and adding some hidden drawers underneath the gameboard.

"Ken asked me to consider adding concealed drawers underneath the gameboard to accommodate supplies and game acces-

sories. However, one of Ken's earlier concerns was keeping the gameboard's weight to a minimum. After I worked through the design, I realized that the drawers could interfere with motor placement and to avoid this pitfall, the sides of the frame would need to double in height, rendering the gameboard almost twice as heavy," says Roller. "So, I got back with Ken and we worked out an alternative - using the player trays as storage."

David was able to develop several designs which accommodated Ken's requests. The first design featured a removable lid which could be set aside during play.



Detail view of the proposed player tray with removable lid. The inside of the tray could then be used for storage

The second design, which Ken loved, utilized a hinged lid that essentially doubled his player trays, but still kept the players right in front of him. The two tier bleacher effect was not only functional but visually striking as well. However, after several trials, but "mostly errors," according to Roller, the design was left on the cutting room floor. David explains, "the stresses placed on the hinges were just too much and they kept splintering away when put to the test. They were great to look at, but they wouldn't hold up to a heavy handed coach in the heat of

a game." Ultimately, Ken opted to increase his player tray size by adding endzone trays instead of going to the double deck design, which Ken says, "will be used to support Subbuteo grandstands and spectators so I will always be able to travel with a "home crowd."



Detail view of the proposed hinged "bleacher" style player tray with interior storage.

Ken also notes that, "I preferred the darker wine color of the player trays on the "wooden field" to the bright white trays with the green field and dark brown frame. My suggestion was to line the trays using a brown cork shelf liner for dirt, [pictured at left] or green billiard felt for grass. Either one would look good and possibly protect the tweaked bases." Of course if I ever use a Weird Wolf snow field cover I might regret not having white player trays.

### Final Design

After working through the many design is-



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sues, Ken and David finally had put together a design that they both were pleased with. The player trays were extended and simplified, the control panel was added to the end-zone, the legs were extended and modified in how they folded away and the player tray hinges were hidden using a european style design.

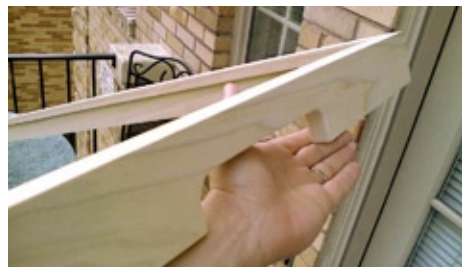


Final design drawings used for construction of the actual gameboard. The stain was eventually changed to a lighter tone due to technical issues.

### Working through Problems

As with any project, things don't always progress the way you plan. Inevitably, you will run into a problem that requires you to change your design. Roller adds, "You can't always see around the corner when you're developing a new design. I try to build in flexibility to accommodate the unexpected. However, things happen."

With the gameboard now under construction, a new set of difficulties were presenting themselves. Roller notes, "I initially thought of using Walnut to build the gameboard. as this is a traditional material for this era of furniture. However, walnut, while beautiful and



WIP - frame ready for stain after final sanding



WIP - leg ready for stain after final sanding



WIP - frame stained with field surface ready for graphics



WIP - casters shown in place, "ready to roll"



WIP - player tray shown with cork lining

rich in appearance, is also very dense and heavy. This would have to be let go as one of Ken's criteria was a lightweight gameboard for easy transport." Instead, poplar was chosen - it's a hardwood with tight grain, low weight and is resistant to dents and gouges. However, as David soon found out, it does have one drawback: it doesn't take stain well.

David tried for several weeks to get a dark stain but was not satisfied by the results. The poplar was not accepting the stains or conditioners. A design change was needed. "David presented me with the choice of either a dark brown glazing that would make the wood dark to look like the design drawings, but it acts like paint and would cover the grain, or a lighter finish that would show off the wood. It was a tough choice but I chose the lighter stain and was very pleased with how beautiful the real wood grain looked."

Adds David, "Eventually, I was able to use a water-based wipe on gel stain to get the finish we wanted. Apparently, water based stains work better with poplar, but poplar is still very hard to work with, stain-wise."

### Accidents on the Job Site

David had a small accident that significantly changed the final product. He had Ken's gameboard stored away while he was working on the player trays, a place he thought was safe. While picking up some wood boards, one slipped away and fell with the end scraping across Ken's gameboard. "The end of the board just fell hard against the field surface and left a large scratch going the length of the field. It made my stomach sink," says Roller. However, his mistake ended up working to Ken's favor. Ken had been wondering about how to use







game accessories with the fiberboard and was having some reservations. Adds David, "I felt Ken's apprehension and I so I urged him to go with a metal field. Sometimes, you have to listen to your client's unspoken words as well as what is actually said. I felt like he would be happier in the long run with the classic metal surface. I knew it would add some weight, but I felt like it was a solid choice."

### Builder's Tip

#### *Staying within Yourself*

Take into consideration the extent of your abilities. You may have wonderful ideas or a concept that would be beautiful and impressive, but unless you have the skills to get it done, it may end up looking worse than if you just went for a more basic design well within your skill level. If your design is out of reach of your skills, but you really still want that dream field, find someone who has the skills already. It takes years of practice and in depth knowledge of techniques and materials and how they behave to be able to get that hot-rod look. Don't underestimate the ability of the craftsman, nor should you overestimate your own.

Ken and I bounced several ideas around regarding the method of attaching the removable/folding player trays and legs. I had initially thought to use small jewelry box hinges, then magnets, then cabinet hinges.

I also wanted to use some inlay or some veneers. I felt confident but then realized I just needed to stay within my abilities. Maybe I could learn how to do this type of work later on my own dime.

### Builder's Tip

#### *Know your Materials*

The biggest thing when starting on a design is to realize that unless you have a full machine shop or woodworking shop you're going to need to use materials that are inexpensive and easy to find, and also don't require much refinement. For example, if you want a piano-smooth high gloss finish, don't start with open grain soft pine. It will take you months to fill in the grain and build the finish. Instead start with a smooth polystyrene; easy to cut and ready to paint! Develop your design to match the materials you have on hand or that you're comfortable working with.

Also, Use wood that matches your design. I know this sounds easy enough, but it really is something to think about before you get too far along. If you are planning on painting the frame, you can use poplar. However, if you plan to stain the frame, avoid poplar like the plague (as I found out the hard way). Instead use clear pine, cherry, maple or even oak. Avoid wood with knots altogether. Low grade wood is more likely to warp, not to mention that over time the knots can work themselves out.

### Getting to the Finish Line

After long hours and countless revisions and technical solutions, the gameboard was ready for the final step: Adding the electronics and tuning it up for gameplay.

Roller's approach to this step breaks from the hobby's predominant thinking regarding motors, vibration, and speed control. Roller

believes, "less is definitely more." Where more traditional builders will use two or even four motors to power a large gameboard, David uses only one, about the size of the end of your thumb. He departs from using a train transformer for motor control opting for simple individual components available at his local electronics store or Radioshack. He says he's able to get away with this because he uses very low voltage motors, 1.5 to 3 volts maximum. "Low voltage motors allow me to utilize easy to find inexpensive components," says Roller. "I developed this approach over the last year and I really owe this to the nature of Ken's design. The simplicity of his ideas got me to refine my own processes and ultimately allowed me to build a better gameboard."

Roller says that through trial and error he's uncovered the secrets to board building with rotary motors - motor placement and the counterweight. Roller says that the counterweight is what truly controls the level of vibration. "The larger the counterweight - the more violent the vibration. The smaller the counterweight - the smoother the vibration. The trick is to find the size that makes it just right so that your figures are gliding around quickly without falling over from a full-on earthquake," says Roller. "The motor by itself is not really a factor. It just has to spin. What really counts is where you place it and that the size of the counterweight is matched to the gameboard's size and material."

Roller goes on to say that, "after the counterweight, where you put the motor is key. I place my motors at the fifty yard line, either dead center or about 3 inches from the frame. These two spots work best for my designs, however every gameboard is different."





## Final Touches

With the gameboard complete and the performance no longer a question, the final step was to accessorize. Ken had been wanting the gameboard to have multiple field options, similar to Reginald Rutledge's swappable 308 fields. However, according to Roller the quick swap field concept was, "really not an option due to the casters and foldable legs found underneath the surface. The field is removable, but it requires some disassembly."

Another design solution presented itself to Ken. Says Ken, "In the original plan the surface was a permanent fiberboard field that could not be easily swapped like the 308 boards. I had the idea of printing on removable fathead skins to cover just the end-zones. This was inspired by the Miggle adhesive end-zones made for the 500 boards... I gave David a list of home teams and asked him to design endzones incorporating the team names, colors, and stadium names, but avoiding any trade-mark logos. We have a lot of lawyers in DC, some are my friends, but others might make trouble. I also wanted to be able to post pictures on the internet without worrying about NFL or NCAA officials coming after me!"

David worked out an array of choices with Ken choosing several of his favorites to represent his various teams. The endzone covers are printed on fathead type removable fabric stickers. They're thin enough to let bases pass over their edge and they're removable and reusable. David says he has since made several more applications of these removable fathead graphics including, mid field logos and league logos.

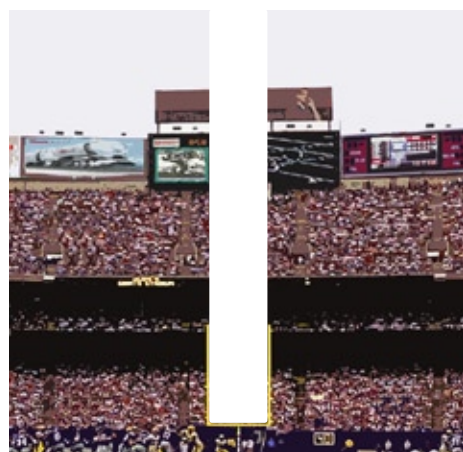
Ken also wanted to take a look at a clas-

sic accessory, the field goal uprights. He had requested a kicking target for use with the gameboard, but was initially looking for a natural wood appearance to go with the overall design of the set.

Roller had an idea, "I wanted to create something that enhanced that stadium feel that everyone is always after. So, I came up with a kicking target that brought the stadium right into the gameboard." Roller's design uses a photograph taken from the point-of-view of the kicker looking directly

into the uprights. Roller says the design is currently being marketed for use by other coaches and has been successful.

Both Ken and David agree that it was a great experience that they hope will inspire others to get the most from their projects, whether they're DIYers or they're using the services of a customizer. The innovations that Ken Tamashiro and David Roller cooked up should be doing just that.



Rollerboard's Pro-Style Kicking Target



Rollerboard's College-Style Kicking Target



Some finished projects by Rollerboards display just how far you can take a board to achieve the ultimate playing field.



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## The Specs

### Materials

Frame: Select Clear Poplar  
Surface: Glossy Sheet Vinyl  
Gameboard: 24 Gauge Sheet Steel  
Motor: Single DC Electric Motor  
Trays: Cork Liner, Leather Trim

### Features

Controls: Fully Adjustable Speed and Remote On/Off  
Legs: Retractable  
Trays: Retractable  
Carrying Bag, Casters, Storage Pockets

### Dimensions

Frame: 25.5"W x 49.5"L x 2.5"H  
Field: 21"W x 46"L  
Trays: 3.5"W x 36"L  
Legs: Add 4.5" of height  
Weight: 15 lbs









# First annual tournament pits Fathers and Grandfathers against Sons and Grandsons and introduces many Coaches to their first tournament action!



Geno Hendricks announced on the MFCA Forum that he was going to host a new tournament on the weekend of April 17th and 18th in Lyons, Kansas. He wanted to give the guys in the Midwest the opportunity to get together and play some electric football.

12 coaches showed up with 8 of them competing in their first official competition. The ages ranged from 6 year old Joe Schmidt to 62 year old Doug Hendricks. The coaches came from Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Colorado and California. Yes, two coaches came all the way from California to play. But there is a story behind that. The two coaches are related to Geno, with Doug Hendricks being a first cousin who was raised in the Lyons area, so it was easy for him to decide to come.

The coaches were: Geno Hendricks, Flynt Hendricks, Jared Von Felt, Doug Hendricks, Tyler Davis, James Sledd, Dave Foster, Joe Schmidt, Lynn (Weird Wolf) Schmidt, Carl Coley, Chris Flynt and Jeff Bissonette.

The format of the tournament had 12 teams placed in 3 four team pools which would be used to seed the finals. All teams would make the finals, with the top four teams earning a bye in the first round.

Pool play consisted of 2 possessions per coach or one hour, whichever came first. All games were finished within an hour and the time limit never came in to effect.

The pool leaders were: Flynt Hendricks 3 – 0, Geno Hendricks 3 – 0, James Sledd 3 – 0, Tyler Davis 2 – 1. These four coaches received byes for the finals and the rest of the guys were paired up to play according to their records.



# THE SEMI-FINALS

The coaches who survived the first and second rounds matched up for two great semifinal games. Flynt Hendricks used deadly passing skills to give Tyler Davis a loss, but Tyler played very well for a first time coach. Tyler is 13 years old and is a member of MFCA. Geno Hendricks set up an all Hendricks finals by putting an old fashioned whipping on Carl Coley, 43 – 6. It was a long day for the first time tournament coaches as well as for many of the veterans, but the finals were set!!



## FIRST ROUND

1, 2, 3, 4 seeds bye to second round

Joe Schmidt	6	vs	Lynn Schmidt	10
Doug Hendricks	33	vs	David Foster	28
Chris Flynt	14	vs	Jared Vonfeldt	7
Carl Coley	10	vs	Jeff Bissonette	2

## SECOND ROUND

Flynt Hendricks	15	vs	Lynn Schmidt	0
Tyler Davis	21	vs	Doug Hendricks	14
Geno Hendricks	21	vs	Chris Flynt	0
James Sledd	14	vs	Carl Coley	17

## THIRD ROUND

Flynt Hendricks	18	vs	Tyler Davis	0
Geno Hendricks	43	vs	Carl Coley	8

## CHAMPIONSHIP

Flynt Hendricks	8	vs	Geno Hendricks	10
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# MFCA SKILLS

Sunday morning we held the fastest man, strongest man, passing and kicking contests. Thanks to Lynn Schmidt for bringing all of the equipment needed to have the contests. Here are the winners:

**Passing Contest: Flynt Hendricks**

**Kicking Contest: Tyler Davis**

**Fastest Man: Doug Hendricks**

**Strongest Man under 3.3: Geno Hendricks**

**Strongest Man 3.4 and over over: Geno Hendricks**







# THE MELEE (pr. MAY-LAY) CHAMPIONSHIP

The championship game was a bend, but don't breakwar between father and son and they knew each others game well!

Flynt elected to receive the opening kickoff and kept the ball for 15 plays driving all the way to the 20 yard line where he just missed a 26 yard field goal. Geno took over, but there was not a lot of time left for him to work with. He hit a couple of short passes to get the ball to the 50, then Lennie Dawson through a perfect pass to a wide open Stephone Paige, and the Chiefs were up 7 – 0 after a Jan Stenneraud PAT. That was the way the half ended.

The second half was more of the same, two excellent teams going head to head. Geno got a field goal in the 3rd quarter to go up 10 – 0. But the game wasn't over. Late in the 4th quarter Flynt intercepted a pass and then quickly scored. He went for 2 and made it to make it 10 – 8. But Geno was able to run out the clock and preserve the win.

**With Lynn "Weirdwolf" Schmidt as referee, it's always a good idea to make every pass as clear a catch as possible. (His vision isn't what it used to be!)**

**Check out the catch below (and the block by #21 Mike Garrett) as Geno's Chiefs start one of their early drives.**



**The Championship begins as Flynt starts his opening 15 play drive which eventually stalled and ended with a field goal.**




**The Chiefs take the ball using a triple back set as they mount an early drive against Flynt's Ramond Boars. These two teams were very evenly matched. One big play by either team would be the deciding factor.**

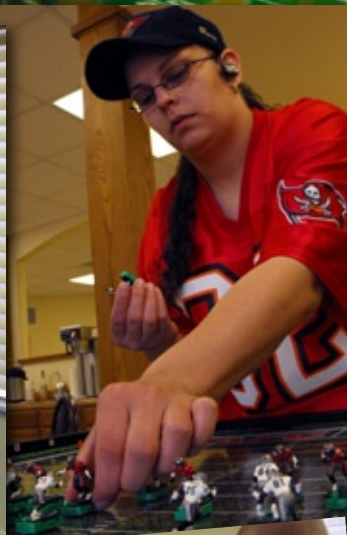




# FRIENDS, FUN & PHOTOS

This was a great tournament, friendly coaches helping each other, and everyone having a lot of fun. Besides the great championship football with an official Mid America Melee decal, there were prizes for everyone. Each coach earned a participation medal. Tyler Davis was named outstanding coach for making the final four in his first ever tournament. Chris Flynt had the Most Valuable Defensive Player, and Doug Hendricks had the MVP on offense with Merle Hendricks of the Raymond Bulldogs winning the award for scoring 5 touchdowns in the tournament. Joe Schmidt received a medal for being the youngest coach there.

Geno is already making plans for next year, and the Mid America Melee should do nothing but grow after the great showing the first year. Hope to see you there next year. 



**Outstanding Coach and MFCA Skills Kicking winner, Tyler Davis, receives his MFCA medal from Lynn Schmidt.**







by *David Nickles*

**What's up fans! This is David Nickles bringing you the results from the *Beltsville* BASH.**

**So, sit back, relax, get your *glasses on* and enjoy the story and pictures as seen through the eyes of a *Southerner* battling on *Northern* soil.**

Down to business! It was two rooms with nothing but "throw down" action! In one room, it was two Southern commissioners butting heads. SAY WHAT!!! YEAH, YOU HEARD ME. TWO SOUTHERN COMMISSIONERS (among all those Northerners) BUTTING HEADS RIGHT OFF THE BAT, Jasper Scott with Illinois vs David Nickles and the Oregon Ducks. These two bulls went at it hard and strong. Jasper jumped on them Ducks 14-0. The Ducks



coach said WHAT THE %#@\* IS GOING ON. He pulled them over to the side and jumped all over his football players and when they got back to playing, they came out swinging. The Ducks got back in the game and scored 20 unanswered points to tie the ball game. The Duck coach made a decision to go for two because he knew that the Ducks defense was hot and should be able to stop Illinois, but when he missed the two point conversion, Jasper and the Illini capitalized on his mistake and beat the Ducks 21-20. Jasper shocked the Ducks, knocking them out of their DSMFL undefeated ranking. BOY THAT'S GOING TO LEAVE A MARK.





Let's talk about my brothers in Beltsville. Let me tell you how they do it in the D.C. They didn't have one room; they had two rooms of gladiators going at it. They were battling back and forth. There were even CBSMF games going on this weekend. There were some surprising teams that rose up and some great teams that went down. We even had youngsters who stepped it up to go undefeated. Young Robert Chalmers went undefeated amongst these great warriors beating everyone in his path including his brother, Li'l William! He had no fear and he proved that he would not be intimidated or stopped by nobody, no way and not that day. When the Bengals and the Packers played, we battled the whole game. He wasn't giving an inch and I wasn't either, but he prevailed and beat me 10-0. He became the champion of the Beltsville BASH by beating two time MFCA Coach of the Year and former Buzzball champion, Adrian Baxter 7-0 for his first ever Beltsville BASH championship! CONGRATS TO ROBERT on his win and to his dad, Big Keith for raising two fine young men! I know we call



you "Big Salty" for all that smack talk you deliver, but I know that you are very proud of your sons!

I have enjoyed this tournament to the highest peak. My hat goes off to the committee who put this together. What a job well done. I also enjoyed seeing all my old friends once again. Let me talk straight at you; Fellas, this is what a tournament is all about. It's not about just winning and losing. It's about that connecting bond we get with each other as a miniature football family. I can truly say I felt like I was attending a family reunion, seeing all my brothers, new and old and all of us having a good time. Special thanks go out to Tom Johnson for beating me early so I could get on the plane on time. HA HA HA!!!! THAT'S LOVE FOR YOU. I also want to give thanks to Warren, Kevin, Dearell, Cory, and Ed for picking me up and taking me back to the airport. It was also good to see Rene "Smitty" Smith, Vance Warren and all the other DC area coaches. I enjoyed hanging with all the new and old coaches. This is David Nickles bringing you the report from Beltsville.





# ROBERT CHALMERS WINS BELTSVILLE BASH 2010

by Ray Fanara



A star-studded field of 14 entrants competed for three days in Beltsville, MD from 23-25 April, only to see a young and talented Robert Chalmers outlast Adrian Baxter in the finals to take his first major championship as an adult. Congratulations Robert. During his run, Robert faced some serious competition in going undefeated to reach the final game. In the mix, it was Ed Scott who appeared to have Robert going into the loser's bracket, but some questionable decision making by Ed and later a fumble helped to propel young Robert to face Adrian in the winner's side semifinal game. In the semi final game Adrian Baxter could not overcome some bad luck during the match combined with and a Goal line stand by Robert at the 4 yard line. With two plays remaining Robert's defense sealed the deal sending a tired Adrian to the loser's bracket at the end of play on Saturday night.



On Sunday several loser bracket games were completed. First, it was Ed Scott VS K-Lo, with Ed benefiting from a late interception setting up the game winning field goal from close in. To survive the Loser bracket, Ed would have to take care of Adrian and almost did until his run came to a close in overtime. In the final game Robert was again able to generate just enough offense to out last Adrian Baxter. Dearell Brevard, Tom Johnson and big Keith Chalmers served as tournament directors making sure all tournament details were accounted for while yours truly scored and refereed games while tending bar when asked. Outstanding sportsmanship was always on display throughout the tense matches and everyone had a good time playing, watching and supporting the hobby.

Out of town notables included Mr. National Corey Johnson Ed Scott from Philly, Morgan Scott from NY, Damon from Det. Kevin Thrower from Pit., and a real surprise was David Nickels from AL. Making an appearance was Vance Warren, one of the original authors of the Rules 2000. The hobby is truly in debt to the DC chapter for continuous support to the hobby and for staging another great event.





# SOLITAIR

A LEAGUE OF YOUR OWN





# RE



BY AL DUNHAM,  
CHRIS LEMAY  
& CHRIS MARKHAM

Let's face it, sometimes you just want to be alone. Whether it's because of league burnout, an unresolved dispute, isolation, or you just want to try something different; sooner or later everyone plays a game or two by themselves. Some find that solitaire play has certain benefits that league or tourney play lacks. You can play at your own pace, with your own rules, and without the stress that competition can bring. You can play with any teams you want, and you're not restricted to any time schedule. Changes can be made as you see fit. You're free to experiment with plays and rules without any objections. Yep, solitaire rocks!

However, before you abandon your league mates and jump on the "Solo Express", keep in mind that solitaire play is not for everyone. There are traps and hazards that are not at first obvious. Playing a full season sans opponent can be both challenging and exhausting. It takes determination and dedication, something that not everyone has. Games can border on the edge of repetition, especially if you are used to using the same offensive or defensive formations all the time. Constantly playing on the same field with the same teams can create a sense of boredom. Yep, solitaire can be a drag!

## Just the right size

There are many things you need to consider before you start a solitaire league. The first thing is what teams you will use. How many and what teams should I use? This depends on how big a league you wish to have or whether you are recreating a current league, a historical league, college, high school, or fantasy league. Chris LeMay had this to say about his latest season... "In the past I have recreated the 1974 World Football League, the XFL, the USFL and my favorite teams from the NFL and AFL. My current league is the 1933-1939 NFL which has 10 teams divided into 2 divisions. I chose to do this league, because I wanted to paint the teams in historic uniforms and see these teams play 'in color' since the only pictures from this time were in black and white. There were also many Hall of Fame players who played during this time and defunct teams such as the Brooklyn Dodgers, Cincinnati Reds, and St. Louis Gunners only played during this time."

Al Dunham chose fantasy teams for his league. "My first season was with just 4 teams. It was short and sweet, but I wanted more for the next one. I doubled the number of teams to 8 (see Winter 2008 issue of *The Tweak*), and divided them into 2 divisions of 4 teams. Each team played the other teams in their divisions, twice, and the teams from the other division once for a 10 week season. I chose the two division winners and the two teams with the next







One of Chris LeMay's 10 classic 1930's era teams will relive their glory days for the first time in living color!

best records for a 4 team playoff. For my next season, I'm adding 2 more teams for a 10 team league and will use the same playoff format, though the season will only be 9 weeks as each team will play the other teams once."

For Chris Markham's BEFA (Basement Electric Football Association), the USFL from the 80's and the 70's WFL were used because... "I wanted to use teams from the past, because I can no longer see those teams play. I like to use every figure available... RR, Buzzball, Haiti repros, etc. I wanted to keep the teams simple, so I made it an iron man league as well. I created two divisions, one the USFL division with three teams and the other the WFL division, also with three teams. There would be a twelve game season cultivating with the Championship game pitting the two divisional winners against each other."



Al had this little bit of insight from his last season, as he stated, "I played a 10 week schedule, with 4 games in each 'week'. My 'week' actually took two weeks, as I was able to play one quarter a night during the work week, and one game during the weekend. Then there were the stats and weekly write ups for the games, which usually took a couple of free nights. As the season progressed, I went from being enthusiastic to feeling like I just wanted to get the whole thing over with around the seventh 'week'. It wasn't because of boredom, but more of the fact that it was taking up a lot of my spare time. No matter how you look at it, 43 games can be a chore, especially when little projects keep popping up around the house, which has a higher priority."

A good rule of thumb might be that a smaller league can play a longer season; a larger league should have a shorter season. Think of a 16 team league playing 5 games each, for a total of 40 games, and an 8 team league playing 10 games each, which is also 40 games. Before you set up your league, you might want to do a little reverse engineering. By that, I mean guess at how many games you think you can handle in your season, then try and decide how many teams and weeks it takes to accomplish that. Let's say, for example, that you want to try playing 50 games. This can be done

**Chris Markham's, New York Stars, may just see more success in the BEFA than their real counterparts did in the WFL!**





by playing 10 games for 5 weeks or 5 games for 10 weeks. This would require 20 teams for the 5 week season or 10 teams for a 10 week season. Another way to figure out your season could be to decide how many games (or weeks) you think each team should play. Let's say that you think the optimum schedule would be for each team to play 8 games. Now, you think you can only handle 32 games total. 32 games in 8 weeks are 4 games in a week. Since it takes 2 teams to play a game, then your league should have 8 teams. And all this time, you thought that those math classes you took when you were in school were a waste of time!

## Size matters, or does it?

Next, you might want to ask yourself, "How many players should I have on a team and what figures and bases should I use?" This is purely a personal preference (and probably a financial preference) and depends on whether you want full offensive and defensive units, special team players and/or skilled position players. When asked about his league, Chris LeMay replied, "Personally, I prefer 11 player iron-man teams, which fit in well with my current league, since players in the 1930 have played both ways (and that's what I can afford). For the most part I only use the "Fab 5" figures – Tudor/Miggle or Haiti Repros. I have used Buzzball or a combination of "Fab 5" and Buzzball. I want my teams to have a consistent look and I usually use the same poses for each position on each team. This saves a lot of time when setting up teams. But you can use what you want. Do a full team of customized players if that's what suits you. Bases, too, are merely a question of personal preference. This is where you can experiment and gain a lot of experience with tweaking methods."

## Because that's the rules!

What rules do I use? This is only limited by, and restricted to, your personal preference and imagination. Some of the greatest innovations to the game of electric football have come about by playing solitaire and the desire to add more realism to the game, such as the "box" for fumbles, penalties, and injuries, play charts and pass simulation. Chris LeMay developed 'The Kicking Game' kick placement cards because he wanted to add more excitement and realism to his kickoffs and punts and to take advantage of the "no fair catch" rule that the XFL came up with in their attempt to add more excitement to the game of football. It is generally best to keep it as simple as possible and be consistent in enforcing rules.



When determining the rules for your league, one thing to keep in mind is 'balance'. There is a fine line between letting the offense be able to move the ball, and having the defense stop it.

Ideally, you should set up your rules so that the offense can run the ball with some success, but not too much. You don't want to have your games become strictly passing affairs, nor do you want them to be running marathons where passing is non-existent. The defense needs to be able to stop the offense from moving the ball up and down the field at will, yet you don't want every drive to be three and out either. Careful consideration is needed in determining which rules you want to use, as some are more conducive to the running game versus the passing game, and some favor the defense more than the offense. Some rules mix well together, and some don't. Let's examine some of the more common rules that are used around the country.

First, let's look at front of base tackling and any touch tackling. Which one will work better for you will depend on a few other factors. Will you be setting up your offensive line with a gap between players, or will they be side to side? If you are setting up with a gap, can the defensive players shoot the gap, or do they have to set up opposite the linemen? Can the defense stack, or double stack with the safeties? Can the QB block, and can you set up the running backs in a wedge? Will you be playing on a 500, 620, 2X4 or full scale board? It's hard to play on a small board with a spread out team and, conversely, playing on a large board with a compacted line. For example, let's pretend that you are using a 500 board, playing with a base width gap between offensive linemen, the QB cannot block and the backs cannot be set in a formation that creates a wedge, the defense can line up in the gaps, they are allowed to stack as much as they want, and you decide to play any touch. In this scenario, the defensive linemen will often find themselves getting into the backfield frequently, often untouched as there are no offensive linemen opposite them to block. Since this is an "any touch" situation, more than likely, you will find that you will have trouble running the ball, and resort to passing on every play.

Now let's try playing on a full scale board, the offense can line up side to side with no gap, the running backs can form wedges with the QB lead blocking, the defense cannot stack and must line up directly opposite the linemen and you play front of base tackle. With the QB and running backs free to double up on the heels of the offensive linemen, combined with the defense being spread out because they were not allowed to stack, more than likely you will have a running mass of players overpowering the defense. You may find that your TTQB is gathering cobwebs because you never need to use it. You don't want your games to become boring. You will want to have a nice mixture of offense and defense, running and passing. It's not always easy, and may take awhile to sort out. Don't be afraid to make changes. Try playing a few sample games and change the tackling, or set ups around until you find the right combination of rules that work with the board that you are playing on.

## Parity

How do I create "equal" teams? How do I not show favoritism to one team over the others? Do I really want teams to be equal? This is perhaps one of the greatest challenges to playing solitaire. One way is to just create teams that use all the same figures and the same pose for each position on each team and to use the same type of base and tweak bases the same for each player at each position.





Even if you do manage to make each team the same way, usually, as the season progresses, one team or more seems to emerge as being dominate over the others anyway. The only time you really need to have a concern is when one team just consistently under performs to your expectations. Then you can simply make adjustments to that team.

One advantage to playing by yourself is that you don't need to have the strongest or fastest bases for every team. As long as the player goes in the direction that you want, and is the same relative strength and speed as the others, you're fine. Minimal tweaking is required, because you are making the teams equal to each other, not to someone else's teams. This approach can save you a lot of time, especially if you are playing with many teams, or teams with large rosters.

## Scheduling games

Once you have your teams set, you may find yourself asking "How do I create a schedule"? Scheduling can give you a headache. First of all, always have an even number of teams, and just have each team play each opponent once, or a home and away against each team. Again, it just depends on the size of your league and how many games you want to play. Usually, a little trial and error will figure it out. For a large league, you could try a free on-line schedule maker like <http://www.sportsschedulemaker.com/>

Now that you have a schedule, teams and rules, there's one last thing to consider, how long should a game last? The length of games will depend on the methods being used, whether there is an actual clock or if you are using a play count. Which to use is entirely up to you. Some guys like to play with a clock because it makes it easy to finish a game within a set time frame. Others like to use a set number of plays, because they don't always get a chance to play straight through, stretching the game out over a few days playing a little here and a little there. The number of plays per quarter vary from coach to coach, some use 8 plays per quarter, some as high as 20. Generally speaking, the average is around 12 plays per quarter. How many to use will depend on how quick you like to play, and how close (statistically speaking) to an actual game you want your games to be.

How much time you spend recording the game effects how long a game lasts as well. Do you really need pictures of every play or to video every play? These are great for sharing with others, but they can take away from the game itself. Another consideration is how many stats you want to keep. Lots of stats are great, but

they also require lots of time writing them down and organizing them. Whichever way you want to do it, it is usually best to keep it simple and quick.

## Phantom coaches

One of the biggest drawbacks to solitaire is the fact that you are the only coach calling the plays. Since you already know what the offense is going to do, the natural reaction is to load the defense up to stop it. In real games, the defensive coach has no idea what the offense is doing, and can be caught off guard. So, how do you avoid over coaching?

Chris LeMay says, "I just play whatever offense I want against basic defenses with a few situational formations. For example I only play a basic 4-3 or 3-4 defensive alignment with zone pass coverage between the red zones and a 5-4 inside the red zones with 6-3 or 7-4 alignments on obvious short yardage or inside the 10 yard line. In my current league, since I am recreating the style of play from the 1930's, offenses are run from the Single Wing and Double Wing formations with very little passing and defenses are mostly 7-2-2 and 6-3-2 alignments. Offensive line blocking is either slanting right or slant left with the defense countering with either slant right or slant left pursuit."

Chris Markham wanted to create a solitaire game where neither team would have an advantage. "That is when I decided to create the play charts. This allows the dice to determine what plays would be run by both the offence and defense and letting the players decide the outcome of the plays. I just roll the dice before the play, set the guys up and let them have at it."

Al likes to use a defense chart, but calls his own offensive plays. "I like to be the offensive coach going against a phantom defensive coach. I line the offense up, and then roll a dice to see what the defense does. I have a chart with about 18 different defensive schemes. Occasionally, the dice will come up with a defense that is obviously not well suited for the play situation. In those cases, I'll override the dice and use a basic 4-3, 3-4 or 5-2 set up, depending on the down, distance etc. For my next season, I'm thinking of reversing everything and be the defensive coach and let the charts determine what the offense does."

There are many ways to play solitaire miniature football. Too often people want to play full season schedules with every team in a league and only get a few games played until they realize the time and commitment involved with completing this task, plus getting too caught up with rules and trying to keep everything equal, that they give up and never complete their seasons.



**An example of one of the many play by play notebooks kept by many solitaire coaches with complete records and stats.**





Chris Markham had this to say. “Surfing the message boards on the MFCA web site allowed me to look at other leagues throughout the US and create my own set of rules, to which even this day I am adjusting. That brings me to the present day. Now ten teams strong, I continue to tweak the team’s bases to make them even, while adjusting the way I play the game. My only problem now is that my league is getting too big. Will I be able to play all the games? Are all the teams evenly matched? These questions, I feel, is the beauty of solitaire football, making every season more exciting and better than the next.”

Al offered this bit of advice: “However you want to run your season is entirely up to you. Try to keep the games entertaining and the season long enough for the better teams to show themselves, but not so long that you dread playing the games. Keep the rules simple, and don’t be afraid to try different things, like adding penalties and fumbles. Remember, variety is the spice of life!”

For Chris LeMay, “The best advice I can give is to keep it simple and not get caught up in trying to keep everything realistic. The main thing is just to play the game and have fun with your season and enjoy the hobby.”



## The WFL plays on in Markham’s, Basement Electric Football League

### The Symbols of the MFCA Solitaire Logo



- Numerous stars across the top symbolize the many solitaire coaches across the country.
- Single star at the bottom represents the individual coach.
- 7 watermarked stars behind the word solitaire and on the red and white stripes represent the 7 regions of the MFCA
- MFCA logo on cap. Solitaire logo on chest
- Number 1 on player shadow symbolizes solitaire
- Shadow driving forward in anticipation of the goal.
- Red, white and blue for the USA





## OFFENSIVE PLAY CHART

	I Form	Single Back	Pro Set	Strong I	Weak I	Shotgun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	HB Dive Left	HB Dive Right	HB Inside Left <span style="color: yellow;">*D</span>	FB Dive Right	HB Draw Right	HB Draw Right
2	HB Screen Left	WR Middle Left	Curl Flats All	WR Curl All	Deep Post Right WR	Deep Outs All WR
3	HB Slam Right	HB Sprint Left	FB Dive Right	HB Inside Left	HB Gut Left <span style="color: yellow;">*O</span>	Slants Mid All WR
4	FL Post Right WR	HB Screen Right <span style="color: yellow;">*O</span>	TE Post Left	Deep Post Right WR	WR Option Any	HB Draw Left
5	HB Toss Left	HB Stretch Right	HB Sweep Right	HB Sweep Left <span style="color: yellow;">*F</span>	FB Dive Left	HB Screen Right
6	WR Slants All	HB Look Left	WR Deep All	WR Post All	HB Screen Right	Slot Post WR <span style="color: yellow;">*D</span>



I Form



Single Back



Pro Set



Strong I



Weak I



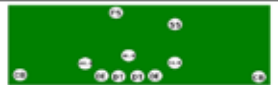





Shot Gun

\*O,D-FLIP CHART OVER AND ROLL FOR PENALTY (Yellow letters)

\*F-FUMBLE 2 to 6 and 12--offensive recover

7 to 11--defensive recover

## DEFENSIVE PLAY CHART

1	4-3 D	
2	3-4 D	
3	4-3 D Blitz	
4	Dime	
5	Nickel	
6	Quarter	

## PENALTY CHART

	TYPE	YARDS
<b>Run-Offense</b>		
1	Clipping	15 yds-from original LOS
2,3,4,5	Holding	10yds-from original LOS
6	Illegal procedure	5 yds-from original LOS
<b>Run-Defense</b>		
1,2,3,4	Personal foul	15 yds-from original LOS
5	Holding	10yds-from original LOS
6	Facemask	5 yds-from original LOS
<b>Pass-Offense</b>		
1	Pass interference	10 yds-from original LOS
2,3,4,5	Holding	10yds-from original LOS
6	Illegal procedure	5 yds-from original LOS
<b>Pass-Defense</b>		
1,2,3,4	Pass interference	15 yds-from original LOS
5	Roughing passer	15yds-from original LOS
6	Illegal contact	5 yds-from original LOS

## ON-SIDE KICK-roll two dice

2-Defense recover on 50yd line  
 3-Defense recover on own 45yd line  
 4-Offense recover on own 45yd line  
 5-Offense recover on own 40yd line  
 6-Offense recover on opp 45yd line

7-Offense recover on own 46yd line  
 8-Offense recover on own 40yd line  
 9-Offense recover on own 43yd line  
 10-Offense recover on opp 49yd line  
 11-Defense recover on opp 47yd line  
 12-Defense recover on opp 48yd line



Solitaire Chart by:CLM Designs



THE MFCA OFFERS OUR CONGRATULATIONS TO THE  
FINAL FOUR CANDIDATES FOR THE 2010 MFCA HOF!



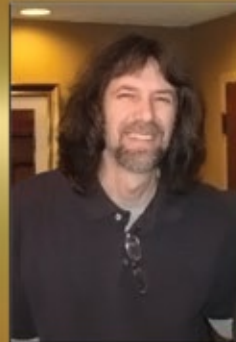
JOIN US AT THE MFCA CONVENTION ON AUGUST 7  
TO FIND OUT WHO THE TWO NEW 2010 INDUCTEES WILL BE.



LAVELL  
SHELTON



MYRON  
EVANS



MIKE  
PRATT



DAVID  
NICKLES



# Speak Softly and Carry a



By Al Dunham

*"Your friends will know you better in the first minute they meet you than your acquaintances will know you in a thousand years."*

~ Richard Bach

It was just a week or so before the first MFCA convention when I received a phone call from Steve Martin. He asked if I was going to Canton, and if I would mind picking up another person, who lived in Toledo, along the way. I said sure, since it would be nice to have someone to talk to for at least half of the trip. I had met Phil Gilliam once before, briefly, when I went to watch the GLEFL guys play about 18 months earlier. I didn't talk to him much at that time, as I didn't want to interfere in his game

At first, Phil can be a somewhat imposing figure. Tall and a little large, my first impression was that of Richard Kiel from Moonraker and The Longest Yard, a little rough and perhaps not very friendly. I have to admit that I was a little bit intimidated. It didn't take long before I realized that first impressions can be very misleading. In the ensuing 3 hour drive, I found Phil to be not only very friendly, but he also has a great sense of humor and an even bigger heart. I found that we had a lot in common and shared many inter-

ests. The way I looked at it, if a guy can spend 6 hours driving to Canton and back and is still talking to me, then he can't be all bad. In a nutshell, I found a new friend!

Most everyone knows who the bigger names in the hobby are, Lynn, George, Reggie, Beenutt etc. There are many people out there, however, that are relatively unknown. Phil falls into that later category. Known on the chat boards as Styx, Phil remains out of the spotlight for most people. In an effort to bring some of these forgotten warriors of miniature football out into the main stream, it's my pleasure to introduce him to the rest of the MF world. Here, in his own words, is the story of Phil Gilliam.

I was first introduced to the world of MF in 1969. My friend called me up one day and asked if I wanted to play a game of football with him, knowing that I was such a big football fanatic. I would play 12 to 14 hours a day if I could, and even play in my sleep as well. I asked who else was playing and he said it would be just the 2 of us. Knowing that he was small and not very fast, I said that it wouldn't be fair.

When I got to his house, I was amazed, staring at his new electric football game, which featured

the Browns and Giants. I was the Browns, as he was a huge Giants fan. He made it clear that no one had ever beaten him. We tried out the bases for awhile, then played for the rest of the afternoon. The next thing I knew, his mom was telling us to put away our game of 3 yards and a cloud of dust. I can't recall who won our game, but EF had me hook, line and sinker.

All I talked about was that amazing game until my birthday rolled around and I received my own game. I can't remember which 2 teams came with it, but I purchased 6 more teams and started my own solitaire league. I tried to find others in my neighborhood to play against, but it seemed like none of the other kids were interested. I kept up with my solitaire league until my sophomore year in high school, when I played football and baseball and studies made me put my game on the back burner. I joined the Air Force after high school and spent the next 15 years in it, mostly stationed over seas.

After my discharge, I was going through my things in my parents attic when I ran across a shoe box of my EF men and accessories, but no board. One day I was looking through a JC Penny catalog and saw a Super Bowl set for \$49, so I bought it. Inside was a Miggle Plugged-In. I



was really amazed to see how the MF world was growing. There was an article by Tony Johnson, from the Ann Arbor area, with his phone number. I contacted him, and he invited me to come up and watch his league's playoffs. Upon arriving, I met some of the nicest coaches you could ever meet.... Ken Allen, Tony, Greg Hardmon, Jim Davis and Chuck Lawrence. That's when everyone decided to start their own league, and the GLEFL was born.

That first year we had 16 coaches, the second year only 12. It was very tough surviving in that league, as far as trying to scratch up enough wins to make the playoffs. After 8 years in the GLEFL, I decided to take a year off. My buddy, Steve Martin, contacted me to see if I would be interested in playing in the young Mid-Ohio MFL. Of course, I agreed. I have never met some of the warmest, friendliest human beings on the face of the earth...guys like Chris Fields and Frank Jacobs.

After joining the mid-Ohio league in 2008, I posted a 5-5 record and made the playoffs for first time ever. I sat out this year because of a financial crunch. I hope to return to the GLEFL and the mid-Ohio MFL in 2010. In 2008 I joined the MFCA. If your undecided about whether or not to join, let me tell you, it's more than worth it. I've had the time of my life at each MFCA convention, even if it meant riding in a car with Al for 6 hours. My hat's off to all the coaches who are members, because after all, we are family.

AD

*Members of the MFCA "family." pictured left to right: Al Dunham, Tim Young, Chris Markham, Phil "Styx" Gilliam*



*Phil get's in a little game time during a break in the action at the 2009 MFCA convention.*

*Phil discusses figure body position during a customizing demonstration put on by Frank Jacobs at the 2009 MFCA Convention.*





Strategy Tips  
from  
MFCA Masters of the Game

Part 1

# DEFENSIVE STRATEGIES

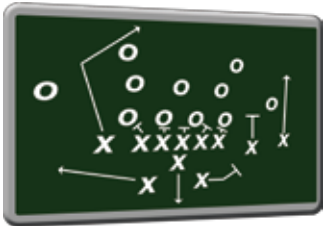
PLAYING DEFENSE AGAINST  
THE

## UNSTOPPABLE OFFENSE

By Al Dunham





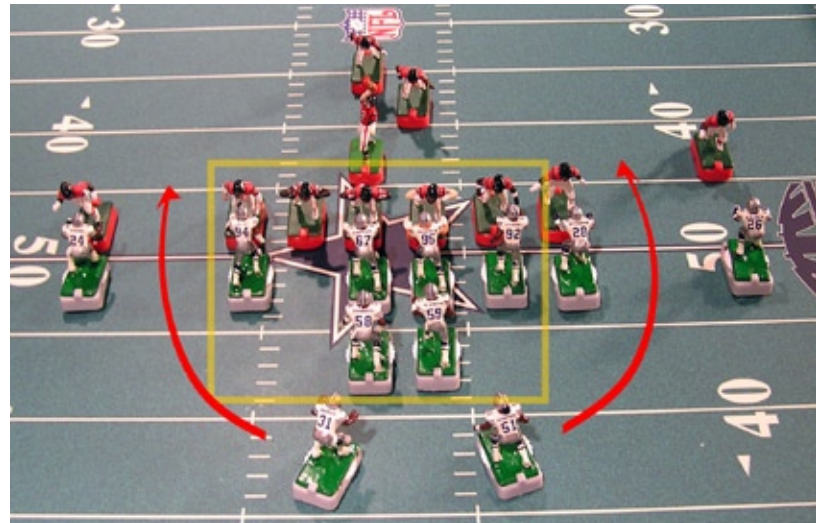


**W**elcome to a new segment from the coaches of the MFCA and the staff of *The Tweak* titled “Strategy Tips from MFCA Masters of the Game”. In every future edition of *The Tweak* you can look forward to some great miniature football strategy advice from some of the big names of miniature football. In this first segment, we will take a closer look at defending an unstoppable offense.

One of my all-time favorite sayings is one my friend used to say to me. He would say, “When all else fails, punt and play defense.” That’s just fine if you have a great defense, but what do you do when your defense is getting pushed all over the place by the other team, or if your defense is geared towards stopping the run, and the other guy is a pass happy student of the school of Mike Martz? What indeed??? It’s no secret that great defenses win championships, but there are times when you may find that your defense is overpowered or outmanned by a better offense. I asked some of the top coaches in the country what they would do if they were faced against such an opponent. Here are some of their tips....

## MIKE ROBERTSON

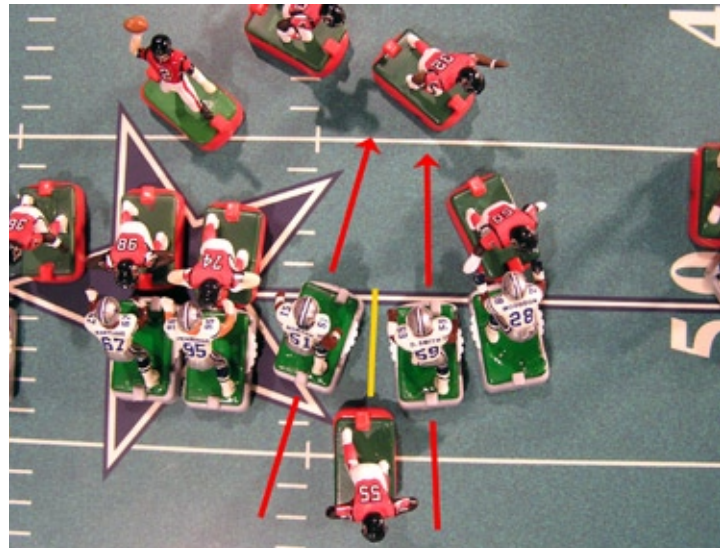
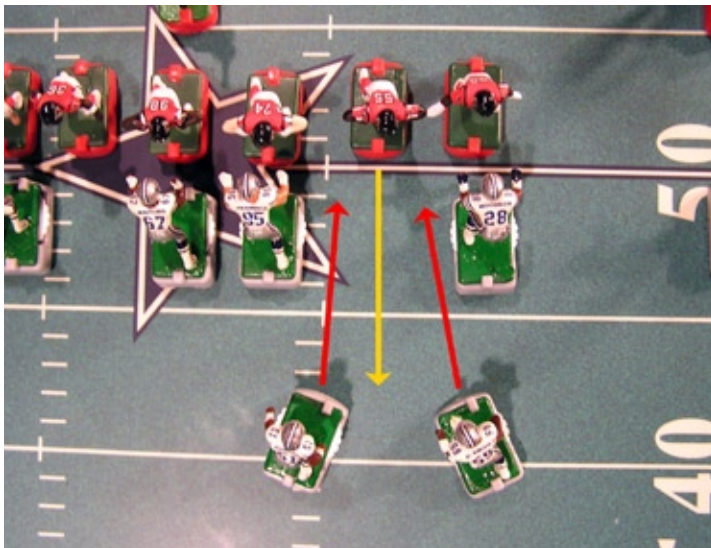
Mike Robertson had this advice when facing a stronger offense... “If I had to play a team that was much stronger than I, how would I approach that team defensively? First and foremost the rule set would play a huge role in my approach. I need to know what I am able to do to combat the strength of my opponent that is within the parameters of the rule set. A stronger team would have the biggest edge in the run game therefore, if the rules allowed I would stack the box and force the team to beat me through the air and apply maximum pressure from the outside on the Quarterback. Because I am stacking the box, I would be reduced to almost man to man coverage in the secondary, so having extremely fast and effective edge rushers would be extremely important to the success of my defensive strategy.”



**Load the box and depending on the allowed adjustments, bring the heat from the outside with speed.**

## MIKE PRATT

Mike Pratt offered his view as well... “When your opponent is stronger than you....GET OUT OF THE WAY! No, seriously. EXAMPLE: If the offensive left guard (OLG) is crushing your defensive right tackle (DRT), just move off of him, either to the side or deep. Now the OLG is left pushing air. Once the OLG has vacated its original position there will be a hole left behind it. Position and time your DRT (possibly a supporting LB as well) to run into the vacated area. Unless the offense has a running back or quarterback heading there, you have free reign into the backfield. Obviously this is somewhat of an over-simplification of one tactic. But it works very well in many circumstances.”



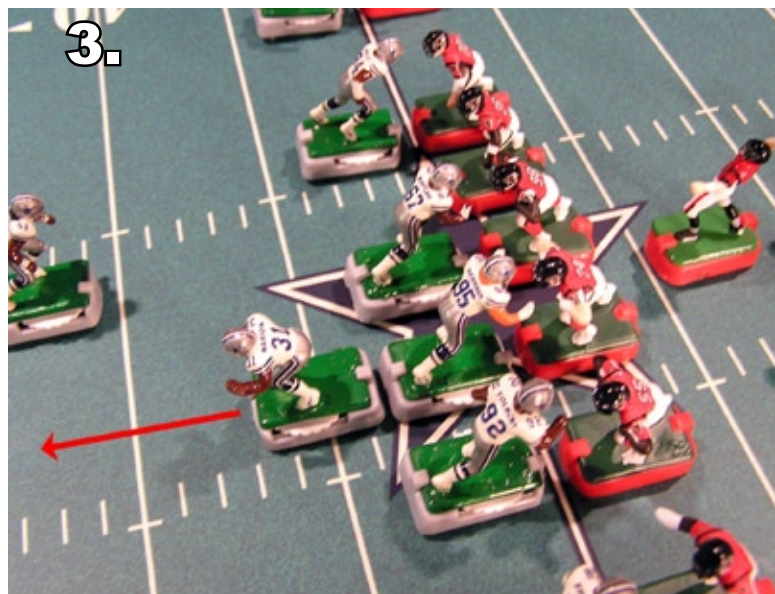
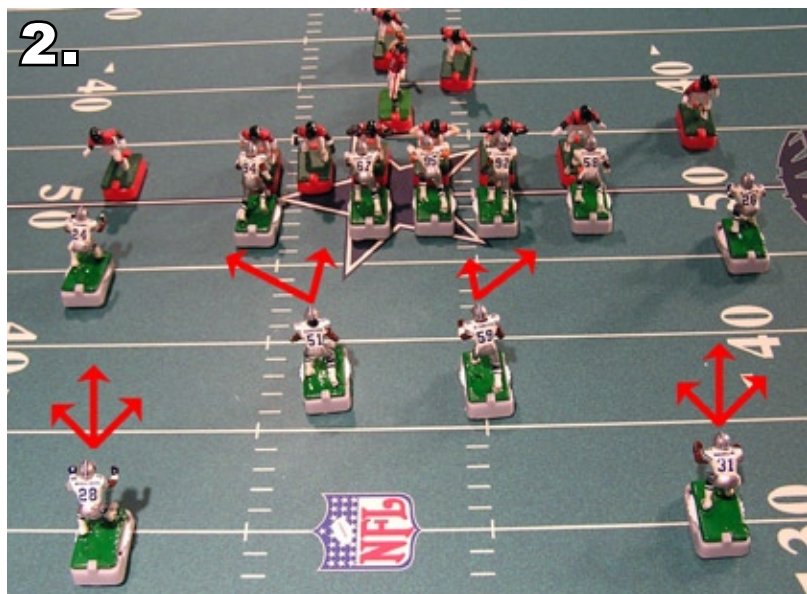
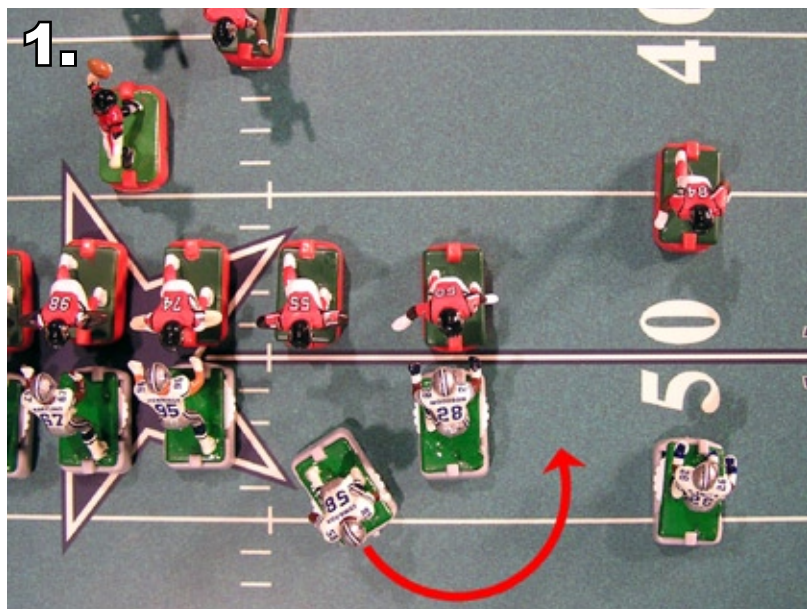


## JIM ROYAL

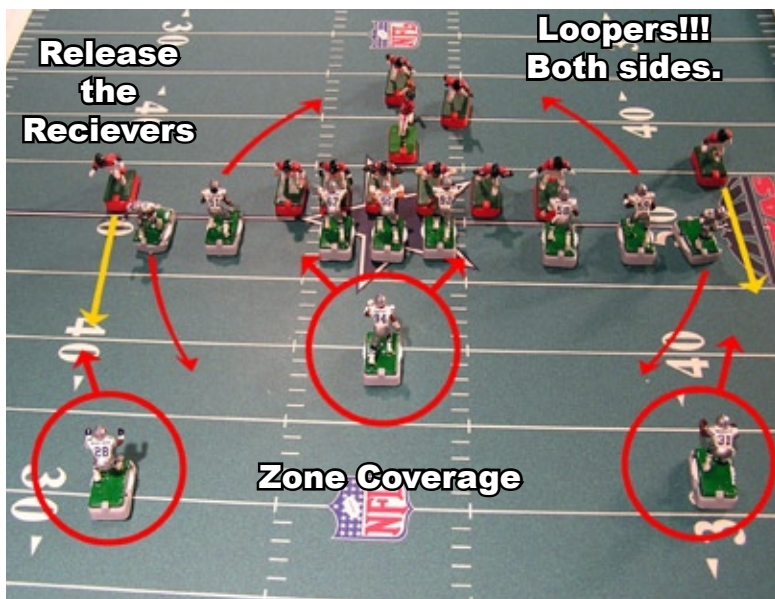
Jim Royal chipped in with this advice... "If the team strength is considered equal, then let's focus on a team that is faster than yours, this happens to me all the time since I suck at tweaking bases. I follow one rule "make them earn it." Here are 3 tips to make that happen.

- 1) You can negate some of that speed by playing good angles. For example, if you have receivers that blaze use your inside backers to drop back to cut off routes and make tackles.
- 2) Play a deeper zone or...
- 3) Take one of your faster bases and put it in the middle of the field going backwards to, at least, keep them from scoring.

While you may not be able to keep them from making catches, the more you make them work (drive) the better the opportunity for mistakes."



## SEAN CARTER



Sean Carter gives his input into the matter... "One of my biggest problems is an offense that's stronger. On defense, when my front five, four or three are not strong enough to stop my opponent I'll try several things! There's no need to play man on man at the LOS. I'll play a three or four man front and play them slightly off the line of scrimmage. I just let the tackles and guards go by. This gives my "loopers" (special players whose only purpose is to swing into the backfield or loop for quarter-back pressure or to stop a sweep) a chance to attack! I'll send loopers from both the left and right side. They will be the fastest and sharpest turning loopers I have. I will bait my opponent into passing, by turning my corner backs/safeties to run with the receivers. I also make sure my defensive backs can make a play just in case the offense bites. When the receivers are faster, try to keep the passing lane blocked and play zone coverage with your fastest TTC DB/Safety holding position until you can adjust on the play. You must make sure they are fast!"





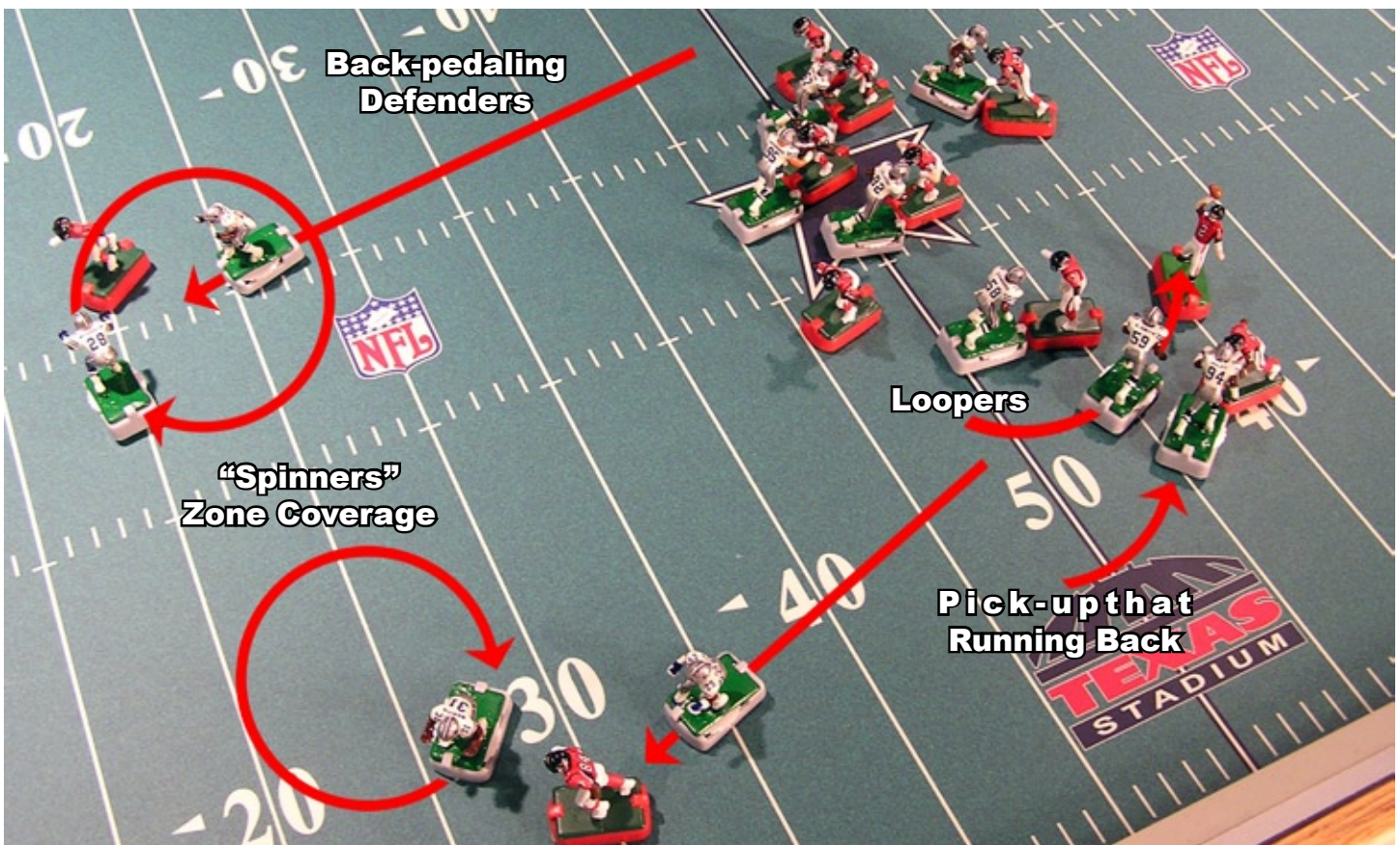
## KELVIN LOMAX

Kelvin Lomax gives us his strategies as well... “What to do against a stronger team than yours?? Against a stronger opponent, you have to use your speed to get to the spots before the offense. That means attacking from the edges, but also allowing parts of the O-line to “advance” without defenders in front of them, but to ‘slide’ in after the O-linemen have cleared out. You can also stack you defenders in the areas that you still cover, to gain some footing in the trenches. Play ‘back-peddle’ coverage on the outside to influence the offense to attempt to pass and gang tackle – not as easy as it sounds, but it can be done.

Now, there is very little you can do with speed...simply put...speed kills! However, you can make it work for you, by allowing players to go free, but you have to keep your safety as the deepest player and he will be your last line of defense. You can use zones by utilizing “spinners” (players set to go in circles so as to stay stationary during the snap and pass rush), but they will leave you open if your pass rush cannot get to the quarterback in time. You must always force plays back inside where you have help. Do not let the outside be the offensive team’s friend. Make it hard to get around your outside line backers (aka: Looper). Otherwise the speed will get to open field and then it’s a foot race.

What do you do if they are a passer first? This is my favorite type of coach to play, because they make themselves one-dimensional by passing all the time. You only have to find the sweet spot in the defense that can pressure the QB enough to force a quick pass attempt and have great zone coverage with your defensive backs. Your defenders should always be in position to make the pass hard, by shutting down passing lanes and making the offense have to throw over, around, or through defenders. To make this style of defense work against a passing team, you keep a defender between the quarterback and the receiver as much as possible. Some defenses, in this case, have their defensive backs back peddle with the receiver. This will work as long as your defensive back stays between the quarterback and wide receiver. This can be tricky if you do not get any pressure on the quarterback, as the longer the board runs...the more separation there will be between the receiver and defensive back. You also have to send extra defenders to pick-up the running backs coming out of the backfield on the flat route. A lot of times it is the running back that kills your defense, because most coaches do not send a cover man to pick up (or meet) the running back as he clears the looper.

Lastly, what if they are a runner first?? Two words, gang tackle! Funnel everything to one side or the other by angling your D-line to where you will be pushing the line to a side of the field. This is where your speed has to help you.”





## JOE ALLORE

From Joe Allore, there is this bit of help... "Against an offense that is a lot stronger than me...I would layer my defense more than normal... maybe a 4-4 in order to either get the extra push of "stacked" linebackers and to get LBs more room to possibly shoot gaps. I would try to avoid getting thin on defense, like where you see the 8-9 man defensive lines because the stronger offensive players would have a better opportunity to individually man handle each of my defenders."



## "THE ELECTRIC COACH"

Finally, from the Electric Coach his defensive strategies... "Typically I use the defense that actual teams use in real life. For an example, if I played using the Bengals, I would play using the 3-4 defense. This defense is excellent against fast offenses, because fewer players are committed at the line of scrimmage. While three man linemen are set on the line, the other eight can be set in a position to cover places on the board. Upon initial set up, I am not concerned where the offense starts. I am concerned about where the offense is going. Fundamentally that is my approach to defense. I send my players to a place on the board where I think the offense will be.

Unlike real football, where the players can change directions, electric football players' movements are fixed. Without interruption, if a player is set to loop, that is what it will do. The same exist for any other figures' movements on the board. With that in mind, I position my defensive players in the best possible place on the board, in an effort to meet and slow down or possibly stop an explosive offense. Running backs that loop out of the back field must not be allowed to go into their loop assignments. That means catching the looper before it goes into its turn. Depending on the figure used to stop the looper, the looper may still finish looping although the assigned defender met the looper during or after its loop assignment.

I play front- of-base tackling; therefore, the point of attack (base-to-base contact) is critical. At the point of attack, I want my defenders to keep the bases of the offense, especially the ball carrier or intended receiver parallel to the line-of-scrimmage. This approach increases the chance of the ball being run out of bounds. Throughout the hobby there are players that can turn the corner when they are faced toward the sidelines. If it is perceived that this type of player is in the game, I want to turn him 180 degrees from the line-of-scrimmage, thus killing the play.

My approach to covering fast receivers at the line scrimmage or in the slot varies. Usually receivers that are fast the moment the board is turned on catch short balls then explode for big gains. If the receiver is fast off the switch of the board, I will set my cornerback to mug him at the line scrimmage. I set my corners up to give a 3 to 5 yard cushion for receivers that are fast after the switch. This approach allows my cornerbacks to move more freely, thus helping against fast loopers coming out of the back field.

It starts by preparing my team to play. It's not just setting players on bases and watching them go. It's about the entire package. That includes the figures used and the performance of each base. I know that I won't be able stop everything providing that my opponent is competitive throughout the game. By approaching each game methodically, I will increase my chances of success.







**The effective and versatile 3-4 Defense is one of the most used in Miniature Football.**

We hope these tips help even the newest coach to formulate some defensive strategies. Check out the next issue of *The Tweak*, as Part 2 looks at formations for getting receivers open.



**DEFENSE, DEFENSE, DEFENSE!  
BLITZ EM'---COVER EM'!!**







## 2009 SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONSHIP

by Don Lang

**T**he battle for the Great Lakes Electric Football League Championship/Season 9 Super Bowl was yet again another classic. The game was played at Taylor Lanes Bowling Alley in Taylor, Michigan on February 21, 2010. This year, Jim “Easy Money” Davis and his Houston Texans defeated Ali Rozier’s Chicago Bears 14 to 10 to win his first ever Great Lakes Championship. Coaches across the land picked the Texans in a walk away win, but the coaches closer to home had it being closer than what many expected. With the GLEFL playing in its’ first season under the “Shootout Rules”, the world was looking for an offensive explosion, but what we got was a defensive match which was tempered by the shake of “The Box”.

There was a nice turnout, as current and former coaches, along with their families, attended this highly anticipated match. The contest was refereed by Jamel Goodloe, Don Lang, and Greg Harmon, with Marty Paris handling statistician duties. The game featured two men who traveled different paths to the big dance. Jim Davis, who was making his second Super Bowl appearance, said for many years that if he could pass as well as some of the other coaches in the league, then he would have won several championships by now. Well, this year the league said “Jim, here is

your shot”. A new passing box allowed Jim to use a passing chart instead of the TTQB. It was tested this season and resulted in Jim having his best passing season ever, throwing for 2,168 yards to go along with his league leading 3,864 rushing yards. Jim brings arguably the most balanced team the Great Lakes Super Bowl has ever seen. He had a league leading 68 offensive touchdowns along with the number #1 rated defense in the GLEFL. To get to the championship he had to get past Greg Hardmon’s Steelers, which he did 21-7 and Norbert Revel’s Chiefs, which he won in a tight game 21-17.

His opponent was Ali Rozier, who was introduced to the league by Simmie Lassiter 5 years ago, making the playoffs for his third straight year, this time advancing all the way to the big dance. His Bears brought a balanced attack offense and a bend, but don’t break defense. His offense is led by #34, Walter “Sweetness” Payton and the Bears 3rd ranked rushing attack. The defense was solid with good movement on the defensive line and ferocious hitting line backers. Ali’s road to the championship was a stress test, as he defeated an always tough Jamel Goodloe’s Lions 16-14, and beat eventual coach of the year, Don Lang, and his 49er squad 34-31, on a last second 63 yard field goal, and snuck past a tough Seahawk team coached by Brian Perry, 38-35.





# The 2009 GLEFL Championship

## First Half

Chicago won the coin toss and decided to defer to the second half. The game started out with Houston's power offense moving the ball up and down the field at will, but it was the pass that would get the Texans in the end zone this day. On the opening drive, Matt Schaub hit Andre Johnson with a 53 yard strike to make the score 7-0. After Chicago's opening drive stalled, the Texans were on the move again with a strong ground game and timely passing. In the second quarter Schaub hit Kevin Walter for a 15 yard touch pass to put the Texans up 14-0. Things were beginning to look bleak for the Bears, but coach Rozier was able to get his sideline under control and keep his team's collective heads in the game. During the second quarter, Chicago finally began to move the ball and struck pay dirt with a 78 yard touchdown run by all time great, Walter Payton. Sweetness high stepped through the Houston defenders with a burst of speed to close the gap to 14-7. That's how it stayed until the half time intermission.

## Game Stats/Highlights

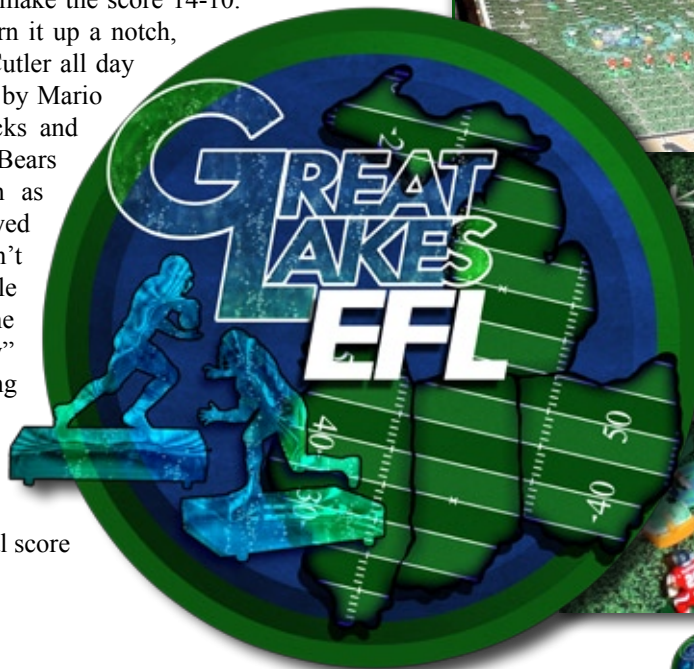
Chicago Bears	Houston Texans
Jay Cutler: 1 of 5 for 31 yards	Matt Schaub: 4 of 10 for 88 yards
Walter Payton: 10 rushing attempts for 99 yards	Combined rushing: 16 attempts for 159 yards
Defense: 18 tackles, 1 sack	Defense: 15 tackles, 5 sacks, 1 fumble recovery
Paul Edinger: 1 XP, 1 for 1 FG – 46 yard	Jacoby Jones: 3 KO returns 75 yards, 1 punt return for 54 yards

## Second Half

In the second half you could see the confidence growing for the Bears, as they realized that not only could they play with the Texans and their fabled coach, but that they could actually win. Tensions were high as neither offense could put together a sustainable drive in the opening quarter. Finally, late in the third quarter, the Bears were marching in for a game tying touchdown. Jay Cutler hit his receiver on a slant route at the 5 yard line. No one was between him and the end zone...that is when "The Box" reared its ugly head...the box was shaken...DROPPED PASS! I personally thought coach Rozier was going to blow a gasket, but he held it together as his field goal kicker, Paul Edinger, kicked a controversial 42 yarder to make the score 14-10.

Both defenses began to turn it up a notch, as Houston harassed Jay Cutler all day long. The Texans "D", led by Mario Williams, recorded 5 sacks and a fumble recovery. The Bears were more than a match as their swarming defense stayed true to their "bend but don't break" philosophy. Adewale Ogunleye led the way as the "Monsters of the Midway" recorded 18 tackles along with 1 sack. Defense won out the rest of the way, as neither team scored in the fourth quarter and Houston held on to win by a final score of 14-10.

Both coaches played well. Ali came close, as he showed that he is a coach to be reckoned with in the GLEFL. Coach Jim Davis added another crown jewel to his storied EF career, as his Houston Texans are the new champions of the Great Lakes Electric Football League. Congratulations to both Ali Rozier and Big Jim Davis.





***In continuing to recognize the efforts of those who use miniature football to enrich the lives of youth across the country, we focus the spotlight on two individuals whose love for this hobby has aided in enhancing the lives of children, and they are Scott Hooper and Butch Carter.***

## Scott Hooper

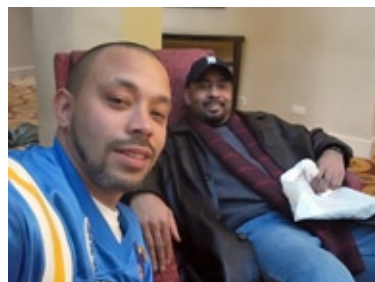
Raised in the Bronx of New York City, Scott Hooper (known as “Hoop” on the MFCA forum) became enchanted with miniature football at about age 10 during one of his visits to his cousin David’s home for Christmas dinner. Scott found a bag of David’s Rams (with the old blue and white helmets) in the basement, which led to a series of questions. David, who was ten years older, pulled the cover off a Joe Namath electric football game with several teams. Scott was immediately hooked. Obviously, Scott wanted the game but his mom said “NO!” She was imagining little plastic men strewn all over the place and did not think Scott would be up to caring for the game. Finally, dad stepped in and said it was okay, and the rest, as they say, is history. Like many of us, Scott spent the early years

collecting teams and playing games with friends all day long. Eventually, he got his first 620 from a friend in a trade for his Namath board. His fondest memories, from those years, were of playing miniature football in his “Tudor Bowl” solitaire league, while watching the Jets and Giants on TV. The love of the hobby carried on throughout high school to present day.

Fast forward to today and Scott, who works as a Dean at Middle School #180 in the Bronx, is still heavily involved with miniature football. He intermingles his favorite hobby with his duties in directing the supervision/detention program at his school. Scott, who keeps a board and figures at the school, skillfully uses the game in behavioral intervention with the kids. They see the game, ask questions, begin to play and become hooked on the different



aspects of it. Scott then gets them involved in painting, tweaking, and playing the game. Once hooked, if the children get out of line, then no miniature football for them. Scott also uses the



**Scott hangs out with Coach’s Corner writer, Don Lang.**

game to play with emotionally disturbed children. The game seems to stabilize behavior, even if temporarily, for those kids. The concentration it takes to paint figures and use some strategy in playing works well in grabbing and maintaining their attention. Scott has, and will, continue to give away boards and teams to the kids who truly become

# Coach's Corner

**By  
Don “detroitchild” Lang**



interested in the hobby. He is also interested in starting a league with the kids one day.

Now a resident of White Plains, New York, Scott finds enjoyment in playing with his young son, Darison, following the Dallas Cowboys, traveling to various miniature football conventions and expanding on his new found craze in the hobby-customizing. He is also planning on starting his "Greatest Games" solitaire league this April on the day of the NFL draft. Regardless of the direction Scott travels with this hobby, he will always find a way to connect it to the children he interacts with everyday.

## Butch Carter

In his home town of Granite Falls, North Carolina, Butch Carter was first introduced to miniature football at age 5 or 6. The first time he came into contact with the game was at his grandparent's house, where he first laid eyes on a game that, unfortunately, no one would let him play. Just seeing it ignited a fire that has lasted until today. He eventually got his first game at age 9, which included the Denver Broncos and Dallas Cowboys, in 1978. Like many kids, Butch eventually ordered all 28 teams from the Sears catalogue. This led to several years of solitaire play. One of his fondest memories was when he faked being sick one day, so he could stay home to finish playing his solitaire league Super Bowl game between the Saints and Oilers. Butch also remembers when he was 12 years old, creating his own football magazine of his solitaire league with pictures and league standings. He even went so far as to film his games with the family video recorder. Eventually he started playing against other kids. He would often have epic battles between his Raiders and his good friend Robert Jones, and his Cowboys.

Like many of us, Butch abandoned the hobby in middle school. He became very active in sports playing football and baseball through high school and college. His athleticism led to him playing as a running back for Lees McRae College in North Carolina, a small division II school.

With a degree in Physical Education in hand, Butch is now working in his 16th year as a Student Concern Specialist at South Caldwell High School in western North Carolina. He also teaches sports class and has been the school's head football coach the last 10 years.

Returning to the hobby of miniature football in 2006, Butch uses the game as a great way to have competitive fun during his high school team's off season. As of late, part of the fun has been to introduce kids to electric football. On a couple of occasions he has given away boards, teams, and bases to boys who have shown an interest. He remembers painting up both Florida Gator and LSU Tiger squads to give to a boy who became enamored with the game. One of his fondest memories was giving an ill, young man by the name of Tanner Parham, six teams, along with other electric football goodies, so Tanner could play with his dad. The look on Tanner's face when he received the gift must have been priceless.

Butch takes his high school coaching duties seriously. During his high school team's season he packs away his miniature football stuff until December. He is so dedicated to the young men he is responsible for, that he wants all of his concentration centered on them. When the season ends, Butch begins preparing for the different leagues and tournaments with the usual routine of painting, tweaking, and practicing with his teams on the electric gridiron. The same determination he exhibits with the kids, whose lives he touched, is also translated in the hobby as Coach Davis has won the Bama Blast 4.0, Palmetto and, most recently, Miggle tournaments. He also competes in both the Dixie and Carolina leagues.

***Here's to both Scott Hooper and Butch Davis, whose love for the game of football, both on the real and electric gridiron, transitions into their love of working with kids. Kudos to you both.***





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MINIATURE FOOTBALL COACHES  
IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN!**



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**CBSMF TOURNEY & CHAMPIONSHIP**

**MFCA HALL OF FAME**

**THE GREAT TWEAK OFF**

**DALEY AWARD FOR CPC REGIONAL TEAM**

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**CUSTOMIZING/PAINTING CONTEST**

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