

### “Flat Chest”

#### Description:

“Flat Chest,” is a game that was created by my grandfather and his friends while they were in middle school. It consists of four players, divided into two teams of two, in which they attempted to push the opposite team over by means of a ball. The ball would be in the center of their game and suspended in the air by the two teams pushing from either side. The goal was to score points by making the other team fall. A judge monitors the game and will decide points, infractions on the rules, and keep the rounds and score in order.

#### Culture:

The time this game would be played was during recess at the school, and the social situation was with friends or classmates who knew how to play. The target audience of the game was children who were in middle school, but could be played by anyone, anywhere as long as they are similar in size and weight. This is because smaller players would be easily overwhelmed by some of the bigger participants.

#### Play:

The game can only be played with four people who are arranged in a square, facing towards the center. The ball is placed in the center and raised in the air when the players are ready to begin. Your teammate is to be adjacent to you while in formation. Once players have picked their setup they must keep their feet planted on the ground. Players could find themselves getting very frustrated as a result of not scoring or being scored against too much. Just as easy they could feel excitement when they are about to win, or they if they have made someone fall. They could feel pain because they have fallen and injured themselves, or they could feel fatigue as a result of a long round.

#### Rules:

The equipment that is used in the game is a spherical ball of some sort that can support plenty of stress. Most often played with a basketball or kickball. Players were allowed to choose their own setup on the ball, the team could be centered on the ball and pushing from the same side or they could be spread out and pushing from opposite sides of the ball. Although they are allowed to choose their own setup on the ball, they are not allowed to remove hands from the ball, come into contact with any player from the opposing team, and they also cannot try to drop or throw the ball. Each player puts their weight into the ball while leaning over and either pushes or pulls to make the other team lose balance. Player’s feet must remain planted on the ground without movement, and both feet must be next to each other.

- Player will choose teams, and decide on the way they will setup on the ball.
- Flip a coin or decide which team will be on offense first.

- Players grab the ball and get it set in a neutral point in the center of the square, and they will support it in the air without applying pressure.
- The judge will tell the players when to start and the team on offense will try to make the team on defense fall.
- Each bout lasts only 30 seconds
- If the offensive team is successful in making both players from the defending team fall they get a point. If they fail, then they get no points.
- The judge counts the seconds out loud and rules if a last second fall counts or not. The judge also keeps track of scoring and rounds played.
- Players reset and switch offense and defense.
- Players will play 3 rounds and whoever has the most points wins the game.
- Teammates must always be next to each other while positioned on the ball.
- They may not shift places with either themselves or the opponent's mid bout.
- If only one player from either team falls then the player left standing can still participate in the bout.
- Once a player falls from either team they are considered out and must step away from the ball and the other players.
- If the ball falls from play it is reset and the game continues.

The boundary rules in effect so cheap wins are avoided are the feet being in the same position from the start of the bout to the end. The judge must monitor the player's feet to make sure they are not cheating by spreading their feet.

#### Definitions:

Bout – the 30 second duel between the offense and the defense.

Round - one round is considered 2 bouts with both teams playing one bout as defense and one as offense.

Point – awarded to the offensive team who is successful in making the defense fall.

#### Critique:

There are some holes in the boundary rules although, and they are the bending of joints the knees, hips, elbows, and shoulders. Proper leverage created from specific bending in these joints could tilt the game in one team's favor. Two tips for effective play would be to generate leverage by bending your knees to deliver a more powerful push on the ball. Also, to push constantly for a couple seconds to make the opposite team push against you, then to suddenly release your force from the ball causing the opposite team to fall forward. This game is meaningful because it is a game that is easy to play, consists of cheap and minimal equipment, and it is a fun game to play anywhere. There is no special arena or place needed for the game and it is created by my grandfather and carries a sentimental value derived from memories of him and his friends playing this game together.

## Works Cited

- Robert Oliver Donahue, Co-Creator of "Flat Chest"
- Three other young men also created game, but my grandfather has forgotten their names.