

# GUNNER, FOOTBALL HERO

JAMES E. RANSOME

GRADES  
PRE-3

## About the Book

*A young football player gets the chance to play in the championship game in this unusual story about sportsmanship.*

So what if Gunner is rounder than most football players? He throws a stellar pass! When he becomes third-string quarterback on his Pee Wee football team, he fears he won't ever get to take the field. But in the championship game his team's luck runs out, and it is up to Gunner to lead them to victory. Will his awesome arm save the game?

## SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### Language Arts

**Vocabulary**—Many football-related words are used in the story: cleats, defense, defensive back, first-string, intercepted, long bomb, offensive, playbook, punt, quarterback, receivers, rookie, running back, sacked, second-string, spiral, third-string, touch-down, wide receiver. Students can discuss the meanings of these terms and create a class glossary. Some football experts in the class may want to add other terms and their meanings to the glossary as well.

**Gunner's Skills**—In order to be a successful quarterback, Gunner needed special skills. Students can discuss which of these skills they feel are the most important and why: 1) A strong ARM to complete passes and move the ball; 2) The ability to be a LEADER of the team; 3) INTELLIGENCE, which helps the quarterback make decisions during the game; or 4) HEART, the strong will to win.

**Controversial Issue**—In a surprise ending to the story it is revealed that the player who intercepted Gunner's pass, thereby preventing the Malden Tigers from winning the game, was a girl! Students may discuss their opinions on whether or not girls should play football along with boys on Little League teams.

They may also write essays stating their opinions and provide one or more rationales. They can then share their essays with the class. Another option is to stage a classroom debate on this issue. See Online Resources on reverse side for tips on classroom debates.

### Mathematics

**Observing Football Games**—Numerous opportunities arise for using math during football games. A link to a suggested activity sheet is provided in the Online Resources. Students may use this while watching games on TV or at local high school, college, or pro games. They may share the information they gleaned with the class.

### Art

**Pennants**—Students can design a pennant for the Malden Tigers using the media of their choice. They can also design their own original pennants. These can be related to the idea of goals, where they can state their own personal goal for the school year on their pennant. A link to suggestions for pennant designs is shown in the Online Resources.

## Online Resources

[www.google.com/images?hl=en&q=football%20pennants&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi](http://www.google.com/images?hl=en&q=football%20pennants&um=1&ie=UTF-8&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi)

Presents a large variety of drawings and photos of various football pennants. Clicking on any image will lead to an enlarged version.

[www.infosports.com/football/5.htm](http://www.infosports.com/football/5.htm)

Presents short articles stating a variety of points of view on whether or not girls should play football along with boys on Little League teams.

[www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/636](http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/636)

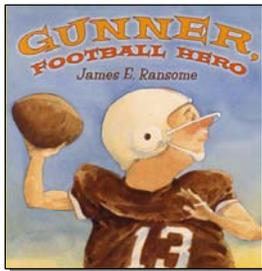
Presents a detailed lesson plan for staging a classroom debate. Although geared for middle school, it could be adapted for younger students.

<http://illuminations.nctm.org/lessons/football/MathFootball-AS-Scavenger.pdf>

Presents an activity sheet that, although designed for a Super Bowl game, can actually be used for any football game.

## About the Author/Illustrator

**James E. Ransome** is an acclaimed painter and illustrator and Assistant Professor at Syracuse University Department of Art. This winner of both the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration for *The Creation* and the Coretta Scott King Honor Award for Illustration for *Uncle Jed's Barbershop* was named by the Children's Book Council as one of seventy-five authors and illustrators everyone should know. James is participating in the Center for the Book's "Exquisite Corpse Adventure," an episodic story project developed by the Library of Congress and the National Children's Book and Reading Alliance. James lives in New York State with his family. Visit him online at [www.jamesransome.com](http://www.jamesransome.com).



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