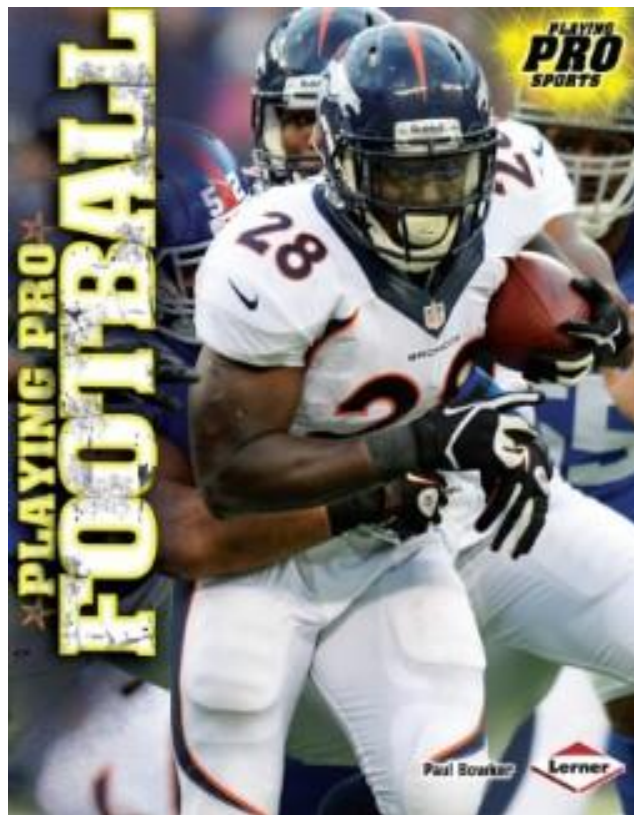


**Children and Young Adult Book Review**  
*Elementary-Middle School*  
**Playing Pro Football**

Educator Reviewer: Helene Halstead  
Student Reviewer: Joel Baker



Bowker, P. (2014). *Playing pro football*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Group.

### **Educator Review:**

In the classroom, I had a full bookshelf standing at the ready should students need or want a book to keep or borrow. Most of the books remained on or were returned to my bookshelf; however, there were always some titles I had to replace each year. While *Playing Pro Football* (Bowker, 2014) had not yet been published while I was in the middle school classroom, it would have been one of those books replaced at the end of the school year.

*Playing Pro Football* was reviewed by NFL veteran Michael Lehan and is part of the *Playing Pro Sports* kit by Lerner Publishing. While books can be purchased separately, the kit includes books on basketball, baseball, hockey, and, of course, football. While some educators shy away from books published in kits or as part of a series, I find that they appeal to many young readers. Each book is format similarly, which allows students to easily navigate the graphics, headings and text. While the books have a similar format, within each book, students will find unique pages containing graphics, tables, charts and text. The visual differences between the pages allow students to skim through the book in order to revisit specific pages and reread information.

This high interest book is appropriate for students from the fourth through the eighth grade; it is labeled as being on a fifth grade reading level with interest levels from nine to fourteen years old. The text includes aspects of the sport that touch on math and science as well as sports. For example, page 12 explains that there are 32 NFL teams and each team can have up to 53 players per season. This means, explains Bowker, that there are only 1,696 jobs available as an NFL player at any one time. Students also read about the skills needed for playing pro-football, about the nutritional and strength needs of NFL players and about the injuries common to professional athletes.

The book, however, is not all numbers and statistics. Personal stories about players fill the pages and engage readers. Students who follow the sport will recognize players such as the Manning Brothers and learn about how they became interested in the sport as well as how they got their starts.

Educators working with learners who love sports and whose motivation to engage in reading could use a boost will not go wrong with *Playing Pro Football* (2014) or the other books in the *Playing Pro Sports* series. The photographs are bright and detailed, the book's organization supports students who read for information, and the book provides realistic information on playing professional sports for students considering this career choice.

Helene Halstead  
The University of Georgia, Athens, GA

*Educators working with learners who love sports and whose motivation to engage in reading could use a boost will not go wrong with **Playing Pro Football***

### **Student Review:**

Listen to Joel's Review by clicking the audio link.

Joel Baker  
Whitehead Elementary School, Athens, GA  
Grade 4