**Key Stage 3 – PE Lesson (rugby)**

**Teachers Notes**

**Overview**

This lesson provides a good introduction to the game of rugby union. Skills focus on basic passing & receiving, outwitting the opposition and incorporate opportunities for discussion/interaction regarding fitness, both skill and health related fitness. Students have the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of skills related to particular moves and to evaluate each other’s work.

Providing role models can be a useful motivator for young people and both role models highlighted within this lesson have not only been elite players with outstanding career records, but both have also taken opportunities within the game to make a stand about bullying.

**Creating a safe environment**

Whilst this lesson focuses on key rugby skills, it also provides an opportunity for some wider discussion on bullying and the roles of teams in supporting players.

At the beginning of the lesson, when images of Ben Cohen and Gareth Thomas are shown, some students are likely to find it funny that Gareth Thomas is gay, or even that the concept of a ‘gay player’ is being introduced in PE. This is usual because of the invisibility of LGBT people in sport in general. It is important that students are able to express their surprise.

It is also important that students are able to comment on the fact that Gareth Thomas was the first openly gay player in rugby union and now in rugby league. Students should be reminded, however, that when they discuss the issues that they are respectful in the language they use, and use the term ‘gay’ and not homophobic language such as ‘bent’, ‘faggot, ‘poof’ etc. Teachers should encourage discussion but be firm in their challenge of homophobic comments or behaviour.

Use the role model of Ben Cohen to show that gay people have allies in sport and draw an analogy with allies in school. This is important because there are likely to be lesbian, gay and bisexual students taking part in this lesson. There may be an opportunity to outline the resources available for LGBT students in school and to check that all students are aware of anti-bullying resources in school.

**Referencing players’ skills in lesson**

During the lesson, you may want to ask students the following:

“During his rugby union career, Gareth Thomas played full-back, centre and wing. Which of these positions do you think required most skill in passing? Why?”

“Ben Cohen played on the wing. How important are passing & receiving skills to wings? Why?”

**Additional Resources**

Further useful information about each player:

# <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xUi29C9ePY> video of Provost Lecture - Ben Cohen: True Champions Stand Up

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2011/may/22/homophobia-us-sport> An article about Ben Cohen’s Acceptance Tour with comments about homophobia, players coming out, and relationships with other sports

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2010/may/04/gareth-thomas-gay-interview-crusaders> an article looking at Gareth Thomas coming out and his cross-over to rugby league

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29dcPDdAtDQ> An interview with Gareth Thomas by Ellen DeGeneres, discussion about sportsmen as role models, comments on the role of team mate in his ‘coming out’ story.