

## MY PASSION

# American Football is a lesson in life and business for managing director

*American Football provides not only a physical test but also a lesson in life, writes*

**Mike Cluskey, MD at Go Shred.**

I have been involved in American Football since 1987 and it is my biggest passion outside of my family and my company Go Shred.

As a young man, I played any sports that were going from football to tennis and even karate. I enjoyed playing Rugby League up until the age of 18 but my body type was becoming redundant in the sport as the scrummage rules changed so it was time for me to look elsewhere.

I wanted to play another sport that would suit my large frame and anaerobic fitness and in 1987, a friend who played for the Huddersfield Rams team, now the Yorkshire Academy Rams, based at Fartown's Arena 84, invited me down to practice. From there I became an offensive lineman and I've never looked back.

There are so many reasons why I love American Football but mainly because of how inclusive it is. It's a sport that suits all body types, it pushes for excellence and is extremely precise.

When I retired from playing I became a coach. This then evolved into me taking up the role of

general manager of a team-based at South Leeds Stadium.

After this, I started the Yorkshire Academy of American Football in 2013 for all ages, sexes

and ability at Leeds Beckett University where I am now the non-executive chairman. We've seen so much success with the academy and I couldn't be prouder of everything we've achieved. We have worked with the NFL, San Francisco 49ers, Jacksonville Jaguars, Leeds United and multiple schools and colleges across the region.

Nowadays, I no longer coach, so I tend to only get involved at the strategic level. This can be anything from grantmaking, developing new strategic partnerships to arranging logistics for the teams and equipment. I also support arranging for our elite players to live and play in the USA and assist with new parents and players wanting to find out more about the organisation.

If you are in the Yorkshire region and enjoy American Football, you should definitely approach the Yorkshire Academy of American Football who will impartially guide you to the best team for your age, sex or ability.

This can even include coaches or staff, who we support with free training, ongoing development and many of our people have even gone on to represent the GB Lions as players, staff and coaches. My passion for American Football has helped me develop many skills which I am now able to use within my other passion, my business.



**MIKE CLUSKEY:** American Football is a sport that suits all body types.