CIS 5640: **Introduction to Game Design**

Lab 8: Design a Sport

Welcome to Lab 8! This week, we're taking game design off the screen and into the real world. Your challenge: invent and playtest a **brand-new physical sport** that draws from the action and twitch mechanics we explored in lecture. This is your chance to experiment with movement, player expression, and real-time decision-making.

Your mission is simple: **find the fun!!** Just like in great action games, the best sports thrive on flow, feedback, and player agency. Surprise us with your creativity—and don't be afraid to get moving :)

Lab Location:

We're meeting at **Highline Park** (on 31st St) — not in the classroom, this will give everyone plenty of space to design and playtest their sport. It's also right outside the Standard apartment so there are lounges for you to do write ups in!

Task Details

Design a sport that emphasizes the following core mechanic & pillars:

- **Time as a Pressure Mechanic**: Build around needing to make quick decisions or use reflexes, reaction speed, and hand-eye coordination.
- **Player skill**: Your game should be centered around a skill that players can be MEASURABLY good or bad at. For example, throwing a ball into a hoop from further and further away (but don't do that, it's boring).
- **Impact**: As we've learned in our discussion of game loops and agency, the game should reward high skill play. Since we have only a short time to work, this can be as simple as a point system. Or a race :)

What to Bring

You are responsible for bringing your own materials to prototype your sport. A few ideas:

- Balls, cones, soft bats, cardboard, tape, pool noodles, hula hoops
- DIY props or costume pieces that are safe and classroom-friendly
- Anything else creative, lightweight, and safe for physical activity

Ideas

- Take a classic sport and add a complication. For example, a normal footrace -> a three legged race. Or a race in which you have to hold something difficult to hold the entire time.
- Start with a strange or new action (hopefully one that feels satisfying to execute) and figure out how to interpret it as a skill to build a sport around. How far can you throw something with your teeth? How many texts can you send in 10 seconds?
- Multi-tasking. Build a sport around having to do several things at once.

Deliverables

By the end of class, you and your team should be ready to:

1. **Explain** the rules and goals of your sport
2. **Demonstrate** how it's played
3. **Break down** the action mechanics and design choices involved
4. **Reflect** on your experience: What worked? What didn't? What would you refine?

Tips

- Start with classic action verbs like *jump*, *run*, *throw, shield*, *slide, etc* and evolve them into new, more expressive mechanics with depth and creative expressions in mind.
- Consider accessibility—can your sport welcome newcomers while offering mastery for skilled players?