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Recommendations and Guidelines for Minimizing Head Impact Exposure and Concussion Risk in Football

**National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
Report from the July 2014 NFHS Concussion Summit Task Force**

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and its member associations firmly believe that athletic participation by students promotes health and fitness, academic achievement, healthy lifestyles, and good citizenship. While there will always be a risk of injury, minimizing the risk of head trauma and concussion in all sports is a priority for the NFHS. Over the past several years, the NFHS and the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) have:

- 1) Produced a 20-minute online educational course with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on "Concussion in Sports."
- 2) Specifically addressed concussion management in the rules books of all sports, including football.
- 3) Written several Points of Emphasis in the football rules book focused on limiting helmet-to-helmet contact and blows to the head with the shoulder, forearm, and hand.
- 4) Disseminated multiple publications regarding concussion management to the member state associations.

In July of 2014, at the request of the NFHS Board of Directors, a task force of medical and scientific experts, high school football coaches, state association personnel, and representatives of several stakeholder organizations met to discuss strategies to reduce head impacts and minimize concussion risk in high school football players during contests and practices, as well as during activities conducted outside of the traditional fall football season (spring and summer practices). The Fundamentals outlined below represent the task force's recommendations and guidelines developed following two days of presentations and discussion of the relevant medical literature and current expert opinion.

The members of the task force fully acknowledge the present limited – though evolving – scientific evidence available to support the Fundamentals outlined below with absolute certainty and explicit detail. Accordingly, the outcomes and clinical relevance of an increasing number of research studies may eventually alter these recommendations and guidelines. Ideally, this emerging data will clarify the potential for long-term adverse cognitive, emotional, and/or neurologic effects from concussions and repetitive blows to the head that may not result in the clinical symptoms of concussion. Based on what is currently known, the guiding principles in developing this report for young athletes and those who oversee, support and administer high school football programs were to reasonably limit overall

exposure to multiple blows to the head and body (*head impact exposure*) and minimize concussion risk, while maintaining the integrity of the game and attempting to avoid unintended consequences.

The Fundamentals below are designed to allow flexibility for the state associations that collectively oversee the more than 15,000 high schools playing football across the country. The teams fielded by these schools may vary tremendously in the number of available players. Team size dictates numerous variables that may affect an athlete's potential head impact exposure. Those variables cannot be easily accounted for by stringent guidelines. For example:

- An athlete playing on offense, defense and special teams will have greater cumulative head impact exposure and will be at higher risk for injury than an athlete playing a single position.
- The fewer the number of players on a team, the greater the chance some players will need to participate in repeated drills, raising head impact exposure and potential injury risk.

As additional evidence emerges, these Fundamentals will evolve and may become more or less restrictive. While the current level of knowledge keeps this task force from making proposals that are specific and rigid, there is consensus that lessening the frequency of contact (and thus head impact exposure) is likely beneficial to overall brain health. The task force also recognizes multiple contributing factors that affect head impact exposure and the parallel effects on an individual football player's brain. For example:

- Position played (linemen receive more total blows than other positions)
- Two-way players versus those who only play offense or defense
- Tackling and blocking techniques
- Practice frequency and duration
- Players that practice and/or compete on multiple levels (such as varsity and sub-varsity)*
- Concussion history
- Genetic predisposition to concussion

**Note: This contributing factor was added to the document by the NFHS SMAC.*

It is very likely that each athlete has a unique level of resilience or susceptibility to concussion and further brain injury. While there is currently no definitive way to measure or quantify this resilience or susceptibility, the task force recommends reasonably limiting head impact exposure through the Fundamentals presented below. Individual risk factors that are modifiable, such as position played, total time spent on field, and sport technique, must be also considered when implementing contact limitations.

Fundamentals for Minimizing Head Impact Exposure and Concussion Risk in Football

1. Full-contact should be limited during the regular season, as well as during activity outside of the traditional fall football season. For purposes of these recommendations and guidelines, full-contact consists of both "Thud" and "Live Action" using the USA Football definitions of *Levels of Contact*.

Rationale: By definition, "Thud" involves initiation of contact at, or up to, full speed with no pre-determined winner and no take-down to the ground. Accordingly, the task force supports that initial contact, particularly with linemen, is just as violent with "Thud" as with "Live Action." However, the task force also recognizes that "Live Action" likely carries a higher risk for other

injuries to the body than does "Thud." The USA Football *Levels of Contact* "Air," "Bags," and "Control" are considered no- or light-contact, and thus no limitations are placed on their use.

2. Member state associations should consider a variety of options for limiting contact in practices. The task force strongly recommends full-contact be allowed in no more than 2-3 practices per week. Consideration should also be given to limiting full-contact on consecutive days and limiting full-contact time to no more than 30 minutes per day and no more than 60-90 minutes per week.

Rationale: The task force acknowledges that there are insufficient data to specify with certainty a research-validated "best practices" standard for contact limitations. Several states (Alabama, Arizona, Maryland, and Texas) adopted varying limitations on contact prior to the 2013 football season. Preliminary *High School RIO* injury surveillance data suggest these states have seen a statistically significant decrease in concussion rates during practices, with no increase in concussion or other injuries during games.

3. Pre-season practices may require more full-contact time than practices occurring later in the regular season, to allow for teaching fundamentals with sufficient repetition.

- A. Pre-season acclimatization protocols and regulations regarding heat and hydration take precedent and should always be followed.
- B. While total full-contact practice days and time limitations may be increased during the pre-season, the emphasis should focus on the proper principles of tackling and blocking during the first several practices, before progressing to "Thud" and "Live Contact."

Rationale: The task force acknowledges regular season practice limitations may need to be revised during the pre-season. This should be done in a specific and systematic manner to allow coaches to spend sufficient time teaching proper tackling and blocking techniques. Emphasis should be placed upon inexperienced players, as they slowly work through tackling and blocking progressions with "Air," "Bags," and "Control" using the USA Football definitions of "*Levels of Contact*."

4. During pre-season twice-daily practices, only one session per day should include full contact.

Rationale: The adolescent brain needs sufficient recovery time following full-contact practices. In addition, concussion signs and/or symptoms may not develop for several hours after the initial injury.

5. Each member state association should review its current policies regarding total quarters or games played during a one-week time frame.

Rationale: *High School RIO* injury surveillance data consistently show that competition presents the highest risk for concussion. The task force is concerned that participation in games at multiple levels of competition during a single week increases risk for head injury and unnecessarily increases head impact exposure. In addition, games played on consecutive days or those scheduled on the same day (Freshman and Junior Varsity games or Junior Varsity and Varsity games) may not allow the brain an opportunity to adequately recover. Consideration should be given to moderating these situations as much as possible.

6. Consistent with efforts to minimize total exposure to full-contact, head impact exposure, and concussion risk, member state associations with jurisdiction over football outside of the traditional fall football season should review their current policies to assess if those policies stand in alignment with the Fundamentals discussed within this report and, if needed, modify the policies accordingly.

Rationale: Football played outside of the traditional fall football season presents an opportunity for learning, physical activity, and skill development. However, athletes are at further risk for head impact exposure and concussion during any full-contact activity. Consideration should be given to significantly limiting the total time of full contact. Other factors to consider include time elapsed since the previous football season and whether individual athletes have recently been, or are currently, participating in other contact/collision sports (e.g., Ice Hockey, Lacrosse, Soccer and Wrestling).

7. Each member state association should reach out to its respective state coaches' association on designing and implementing a coach education program that appropriately integrates youth, middle school, and high school football programs in every community. USA Football and the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching courses should be the primary education resources for all coaches. Education for coaches should also include the proper fitting and care of helmets.

Rationale: The game of football continues to evolve and proper coaching technique at each level is fundamental to keeping the game safe and enjoyable. A proper fitting helmet may help decrease, but not eliminate concussion risk.

8. Each member state association should regularly educate its schools on current state concussion law and policies and encourage schools to have a written Concussion Management Protocol. Schools should also be encouraged to share this information with coaches, parents, and students annually.

Rationale: Many schools experience frequent turnover of Athletic Directors and coaches. Frequent "refreshers" on state concussion laws and policies as well as sample concussion management protocols should be made available to ensure all schools are current on, and prepared for, safe and effective concussion management.

9. An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) with clearly defined written and practiced protocols should be developed and in place at every high school. When possible, an athletic trainer should be present at all practices and games.

Rationale: An effective EAP should be in place, as a prompt and appropriate response to any emergency situation can save a life. The EAP should be designed and practiced to address all teams (Freshman, Junior Varsity, and Varsity) and all practice and game sites. An athletic trainer is a key component in any strategy to minimize injury risk and optimize safety for all participants.

Resources:

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Approved by the NFHS Concussion Summit Task Force in August 2014; Approved by the NFHS SMAC in October 2014; and Approved by the NFHS Board of Directors in October 2014.

DISCLAIMER – NFHS Position Statements and Guidelines

The NFHS regularly distributes position statements and guidelines to promote public awareness of certain health and safety-related issues. Such information is neither exhaustive nor necessarily applicable to all circumstances or individuals, and is no substitute for consultation with appropriate health-care professionals. Statutes, codes or environmental conditions may be relevant. NFHS position statements or guidelines should be considered in conjunction with other pertinent materials when taking action or planning care. The NFHS reserves the right to rescind or modify any such document at any time.



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2/2/16

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OREGON HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACHES TO BEGIN TRAINING WITHIN USA FOOTBALL'S HEADS UP FOOTBALL® PROGRAM FOR 2016 SEASON

***OSAA is the first state high school activities association to require
USA Football's High School Heads Up Football program to advance player safety in 2016***

High school football programs statewide are kicking off the 2016 season with a focus on coaching education and student-athlete safety through USA Football's Heads Up Football® program. Beginning Feb. 13, USA Football will conduct more than one dozen Heads Up Football Player Safety Coach clinics across Oregon.

For the good of its student-athletes, the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) is the country's first state high school activities association to require its member schools' football coaches to enroll in USA Football's Heads Up Football® program for the 2016 season.

Heads Up Football establishes nationally endorsed standards rooted in the best available science.

USA Football, the sport's national governing body and recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee, trains more high school and youth football coaches combined than any organization in the country.

Heads Up Football is a comprehensive approach to teach and play the No. 1 participatory sport of U.S. high school boys. Supported by the American College of Sports Medicine, the National Athletic Trainers' Association and the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, the program teaches tackling and blocking techniques designed to reduce helmet contact while addressing all-sport-relevant topics with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concussion recognition and response; sudden cardiac arrest protocols; hydration and heat preparedness; and instruction on proper helmet and shoulder pad fitting.

More than 1,100 high schools and nearly 70 percent of U.S. youth football leagues registered for Heads Up Football in 2015 for smarter, safer play. Fairfax County (Va.) Public Schools, the ninth-largest school district in the country and the first school district to adopt Heads Up Football on the high school level, recorded a 16 percent decrease in football injuries and a 28 percent decrease in concussions since employing Heads Up Football's curriculum and hands-on training.

In addition, the South Bend Community School Corporation employed USA Football's Heads Up Football program for the first time in 2015 and reported a 40 percent decline in concussions sustained by football-playing student-athletes.

Each OSAA member school will designate one Player Safety Coach (PSC) from its football coaching staff. PSCs will be trained by USA Football to guide, direct and monitor the program's implementation as well as lead in-person training for fellow coaches, parents and student-athletes.

"The OSAA is excited to partner with USA Football in implementing the Heads Up Football program," said Tom Welter, executive director of the OSAA. "Our primary goal is always to try to ensure the health and safety of our student-athletes. This educational program will provide all of our coaches with the knowledge, the training, the skills and the techniques to teach the game of football with safety as the top priority."

Dr. Michael Koester, chairperson of the OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, says the Heads Up Football requirement in Oregon is logical considering in 2008 OSAA became the first state high school activities association to prohibit same day return to play for athletes with a suspected concussion.



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"The really exciting thing about this program is that what happens at the high school level will spread throughout the youth programs in each community," Koester said. "This will allow kids to develop their skills in a culture that shares the same language, same techniques and same safety standards from grade school through high school."

"The OSAA's commitment to its football student-athletes is exceptional and ground-breaking," USA Football CEO Scott Hallenbeck said. "As the first state high school association requiring its member schools to employ our medically endorsed Heads Up Football program, the OSAA shares our highest priority of advancing player safety through the best available science. Coaches are teachers. Supporting them with education is a powerful catalyst to change for the better how players are taught and safety is addressed."

USA Football will conduct the following Heads Up Football Player Safety Coach clinics in Oregon this year:

Date/Time	Location	Address
Saturday, February 13	Eastern, OR	Nyssa High School 824 Adrian Blvd. Nyssa, OR 97913
Saturday, February 20	Portland, OR	West Linn High School 5464 W A St. West Linn, OR 97068
Saturday, March 5	Bend, OR	Bend High School 230 NE 6th Street Bend, OR 97701
Saturday, April 23	Cottage Grove, OR	Cottage Grove High School 1375 S. River Road Cottage Grove, OR 97424
Saturday, April 30	Coos Bay, OR	Marshfield High School 927 Ingersoll Avenue Coos Bay, OR 97420
Saturday, May 7	Medford, OR	South Medford High School 1551 Cunningham Avenue Medford, OR 97501
Saturday, May 14	Ontario, OR	Ontario High School 1115 W Idaho Ave. Ontario, OR 97914
Saturday, May 21	Tigard, OR	Tigard High School 9000 SW Durham Road Tigard, OR 97224
Saturday, June 4	Bend, OR	Summit High School 2855 NW Clearwater Drive Bend, OR 97701
Saturday, June 25	Eugene, OR	Sheldon High School 2455 Willakenzie Road Eugene, OR 97401
Saturday, July 9	Gold Beach, OR	Gold Beach High School 29516 Ellensburg Avenue Gold Beach, OR 97444
Saturday, July 16	Newport, OR	Newport High School 322 NE Eads Street Newport, OR 97365
Saturday, July 23	Gresham, OR	Gresham High School 1200 N. Main Avenue Gresham, OR 97030
Saturday, August 13	Roseburg, OR	Roseburg High School 400 W. Harvard Avenue Roseburg, OR 97470



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About the OSAA: The Oregon School Activities Association (www.osaa.org) is a private nonprofit, board governed association comprised of 290 member high schools. The OSAA, a member of the National Federation of State High School Associations, annually sponsors 116 state championships in 19 sports and activities. Follow the OSAA at www.facebook.com/osaasports, on Twitter at @OSAASports and Instagram @OSAASports.

About USA Football: Indianapolis-based USA Football (www.usafootball.com) is the sport's national governing body, leading the game's development for youth, high school and other amateur players. A member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, USA Football partners with leaders in medicine, child advocacy and sport to establish standards rooted in the best available science. USA Football advances coaching education and player skill development for safer play and positive experiences through football. Follow USA Football at www.facebook.com/usafootball or on Twitter @USAFootball.

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Why USA Football – Heads Up Certification

Who is endorsing USA Football's Heads Up Program?

USA Football is the national governing body of the sport of Football in the United States. The USA Football Heads Up Football program is supported and endorsed by the NFL, NCAA, NFHS, NIAAA, and the AFCA. The Pac12 Conference along with the ACC, Big 12, Big 10, and the SEC also endorse the program. Medical related organizations including the American College of Sports Medicine, American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Athletic Trainers Association, and the Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society are affiliate partners.

Why is Heads Up certification important to the future of the game?

USA Football's Heads Up Football is football's most comprehensive player safety program that standardizes the teaching of the games all-player fundamentals and provides resources to aid coaches in player and parent communication. A key element of the program is the Player Safety Coach. This person is nominated by their HS Athletics Director (often times the Head Coach) and is trained to implement the program by one of USA Football's Master Trainers (i.e. Terry Summerfield). The Player Safety coaches gain access to the "Coaches Dashboard" that includes additional training materials like practice schedules, specific skill building drills, and option to obtain advice from master coaches using an online forum available 24 hours a day.

Why are we mandating the Heads Up certification for all Football coaches in Oregon?

We are at a significant moment in the sport of football. Participation has declined, and the culture of football needs to change. Heads Up Football is a comprehensive solution to address these issues. Participating schools' Football coaches will be instructed in Heads Up Football through in-person and online training using a train-the-trainer model. After selecting a Player Safety Coach, this person will be trained in-person by USA Football and will be responsible for bringing Heads Up Football® back to the school through a prepared curriculum.

What type of training is included in the Heads UP certification program?

Key components of the Heads Up Football certification program include equipment fitting, NFHS concussion recognition and awareness education, NFHS heat and hydration education, Heads Up tackling and blocking fundamentals, and Sudden Cardiac. Training in one or more of these topics by Football coaches is already required in most states, including Oregon. Combining training in these topics into a single certification makes sense.

What does the Player Safety coach do?

The Player Safety Coach is responsible for overseeing the school's implementation of Heads Up Football. A Player Safety Coach attends a four hour training clinic with USA Football; ensures all coaches are certified; holds in-person clinics for coaches, players and parents; and serves as the school's expert and point of contact for player health and safety.

What other benefits do coaches get by becoming Heads Up certified?

USA Football provides a content rich training platform that allows continuing education in the newest and safest techniques within the game. Instructional videos narrated and demonstrated by coaches at the youth, high school, college and professional levels help coaches to integrate these techniques into practice schedules and provide strategies for game situations. The power of developing a "Football only" community that allows coaches to ask questions and get answers from others can be a powerful tool in advancing any program.

Coaches who complete the Heads Up certification program become eligible to for additional general liability and accident insurance through entities partnered with USA Football.

Are coaches required to “recertify” each year?

Yes, coaches must complete an online recertification course each year to renew certification.

How can the Heads Up program impact youth programs that feed our member schools?

Schools that adopt the Heads Up program can have a direct influence on youth programs that feed their school. Many State Associations only regulate programs at the high school level and thus inconsistencies develop between the two levels of play leading to confusion in the teaching of techniques and application of the fundamentals. Having everyone involved in the same certification program will only help to make the game safer and provide players the opportunity to reinforce fundamentals of the game throughout their playing cycle.

How does the Heads Up program benefit parents and players?

Free memberships for players and parents allows the opportunity for parents to play a role in their child’s football experience and wellbeing. USA Football provides parent members with a Safety Checklist that includes questions, resources and other important information every football parent should know. Parent and player memberships are paired for parental peace of mind. Membership tools and resources enable parents to make football safer for their player and become more involved. Player safety needs to become a shared responsibility and the USA Football membership provides the platform to accomplish this goal.

What will the Heads Up program cost schools?

The cost of the certification is \$10.00 per coach per year. This fee includes the perks mentioned above and covers the cost of the additional insurance provided to Heads Up certified coaches. More information about the insurance program can be found on the USA Football website using the links below.

Where can I find more information about the Heads Up Certification Program?

More information is available at the following links:

USA Football - <http://usafootball.com/>

Heads Up Football - <http://usafootball.com/headsup/>

Heads Up Football Blog - <http://usafootball.com/blogs/heads-up-football/122>

OSAA Heads Up webpage – <http://www.osaa.org/headsup>

Tom Welter

From: Kyle Stanfield
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 10:32 AM
To: Tom Welter
Subject: Medical Committee Info - ImPACT

I had a note on my calendar to extract the information from our system for the SMAC meeting.

The data exported was from June 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015
Number of Pre-Tests used in the OSAA System: 15,708
Number of Post-Tests used in the OSAA System: 1,782

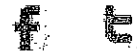
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St. Helens High School
Warrenton High School

Ryan Rockwood (Portland West)

Banks High School
Century High School
Glencoe High School
Hillsboro High School
Jesuit High School
Liberty High School
McMinnville High School
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Oregon Episcopal School
Sherwood High School
St. Mary's Academy
Tigard High School
West Linn High School
Westside Christian High School
Wilsonville High School
Woodburn High School

Juliet Baker (Portland East)

Benson High School
Canby High School
Clackamas High School
Cleveland High School
Franklin High School (OR)
Gladstone High School
Grant High School
Jefferson High School
Lake Oswego High School
Lincoln High School
Madison High School
Milwaukie High School
Oregon City High School
Parkrose High School
Rex Putnam High School
Riverdale High School
Roosevelt High School

John Baresse (The Dalles)

Corbett High School
Hood River County
Horizon Christian Academy
Sandy High School
The Dalles High School
Big Sky League
Arlington
Condon
Dufur
Horizon Christian HR
Ione
Mitchell
Sherman
South Wasco County
Spray
Wheeler

Cassi Martin (Salem)

Blanchet Catholic School
Cascade High School
Dallas High School
Gervais High School
Mount Angel School District
North Salem High School
Sprague High School
St. Paul School District
Stayton High School

Jeremy Ainsworth (Albany/Corvallis)

Harrisburg High School
Junction City High School
Newport High School Football
Newport Middle School
Philomath High School
South Albany High School
Sweet Home High School
Taft High School
Toledo High School
Waldport High School
West Albany High School

Ricky Rodriguez (Eugene)

Churchill High School
Cottage Grove High School
Elmira High School
North Eugene High School
Pleasant Hill High School
Sheldon High School
South Eugene High School
Thurston High School
Willamette High School

Julie Patterson (Roseburg)

Ashland High School
Bandon High School
Brookings-Harbor High School
Crater High School
Eagle Point High School
Grants Pass High School
Illinois Valley High School
North Bend High School
North Medford High School
Phoenix High School
Roseburg High School
Siuslaw High School
South Medford High School
St. Marys School
Sutherlin High School

Cari Wood (Redmond)

Burns High School
Crook Country High School
Culver High School
Grant Union High School
Madras High School
Prospect Charter School
Redmond High School
Ridgeview High School

Debbi Green (Pendleton)

Dayville High School
Echo High School
Elgin High School
Griswold High School
High Desert Middle School
Imbler High School
Joseph High School
Pendleton High School
Pine Eagle High School
Powder Valley High School
Riverside High School
Vale High School
Wallowa High School
Weston-McEwen High School

Lindsay Halger (Bend)

Bend Senior High School
Bonanza High School
Chiloquin High School
Gilchrist High School
Henley High School
La Pine High School
Lakeview High School
Lost River High School
Mazama High School
Mountain View High School
North Lake High School
Oregon Co-Op Schools
Summit High School

Tom Welter

From: Kyle Stanfield
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 10:17 AM
To: Tom Welter
Subject: OSAA Foundation - Doctor Network

Currently we have the following doctors in our system:

Jim Chesnutt – OHSU – Portland
Vivian Ugalde – The Center – Bend
Mick Koester – Slocum Center – Eugene

We feel the following areas would be beneficial to have a doctor representation

Valley: Medford, Corvallis, Salem
Metro: Additional Doctor in Portland
Eastern: Pendleton, Boise

That would give us nine doctors total around the state and our 11 ATC's would be under them within the network.

Kyle Stanfield, Assistant Executive Director
503.682.6722 x239 | kyles@osaa.org | C: 503.919.8525



Oregon School Activities Association

OSAA.org

[Foundation](#)



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