

**AWARENESS OF FOOTBALL RISK**

The coaches in our football program are well qualified professional people who emphasize the proper fundamentals related to playing the game of football. Regardless of this fact, being a contact sport, injuries will occur. It is the purpose of this handout to not only inform the player and the parent of this, but also to make them aware of the safety precautions that must be adhered to in order to either prevent or to minimize injuries.

By rule, the helmet is not to be used as a ‘ram’. It is not possible to play the game safely or correctly without making some contact with the helmet when properly blocking and tackling, but proper technique would be for the initial contact to be made for the shoulder. In addition, the head should never be bent downward when making contact. If the head is bent downward on contact or if the contact is on the top of the helmet serious injury could possibly occur, including dislocation, nerve damage, paralysis or even death.

Rules also prohibit a player from blocking below the waist outside a two yard by 4 yard area next to the football. This was an important rule change that was made to help minimize the number of serious knee and ankle injuries.

It is important also that the uniform, especially the helmet and shoulder pads properly fits. All players should have some basic knowledge of the correct fitting of the uniform. Shoulder pads are too small will leave the shoulder point vulnerable; to bruises and separation. If they are too tight in the neck area, a pinched nerve could result. Shoulder pads that are too large will leave the neck area poorly protected and will slide on the shoulders, making the vulnerable to bruises and separation.

Helmets must fit snugly at the contact points: front, back, and top of the head. The helmet must be safely “NOCSAE” branded and a warning sticker must be on it. On contact a helmet too tight could produce a headache. One too loose could produce headache, concussion, a face injury such as a broken nose or cheek bone or a serious neck injury. No player should practice until, both he and the coach are satisfied with the proper fit of the helmet.

This handout does not cover all potential injury possibilities in playing football, but it is an effort to make both the players and the parents aware of the fact that proper techniques adhering to the rules of the game and properly fitting equipment are vital to each player’s safety and enjoyment of the game.

.....  
We understand the information presented and are aware of the risks involved in playing football. We also understand that the player must accept a major role in the prevention of serious injuries by adhering to the rules, by using proper technique and by using only properly fitted equipment.

- \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Athlete
- \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian
- \_\_\_\_\_  
Date