

REDUCING HEAD AND NECK INJURIES IN FOOTBALL

1. Athletes must be given proper conditioning exercises which will strengthen their necks so they can **KEEP THE HEAD UP WHEN BLOCKING AND TACKLING**. Ball carriers should also be taught to keep their heads up when making contact with a tackler.
2. Coaches should drill the athletes in proper execution of the fundamental football skills, particularly blocking and tackling. **CONTACT SHOULD ALWAYS BE MADE WITH THE HEAD UP AND NEVER WITH THE TOP OF THE HEAD/HELMET.**
3. Coaches and officials should discourage the players from using their heads as battering rams. The **RULES PROHIBITING SPEARING AND FACE FIRST CONTACT MUST BE ENFORCED IN PRACTICE AND IN GAMES.**
4. All **COACHES, PHYSICIANS, AND ATHLETIC TRAINERS SHOULD TAKE SPECIAL CARE TO SEE THAT THE PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT IS PROPERLY FITTED, PARTICULARLY THE HELMET.**
5. **ANY PLAYER WHO HAS EXPERIENCED, OR SHOWN SIGNS, OF HEAD TRAUMA** (*loss of consciousness, visual disturbances, headache, inability to walk correctly, obvious disorientation, memory loss*) **SHOULD RECEIVE IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION AND SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO PRACTICE OR COMPETITION WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE PROPER MEDICAL AUTHORITIES.**
6. **PLAYERS SHOULD BE MADE AWARE OF THE SIGNS OF CONCUSSION.** Players should also be encouraged to inform the team physician, athletic trainer, or coach if they are experiencing any of the above-mentioned signs of brain trauma. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game or practice as per Iowa law. The player shall not return until receiving written clearance to return to participate by an appropriate health-care professional.

IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, 2012

Adapted from: The Annual Survey of Football Injury Research, 1931-2011 by The American Football Coaches Association.