

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Terry Hoffmann
O: 314-982-0298 | M: 310-614-3531
terry.hoffmann@fleishman.com

NOCSAE Winter Standards Meeting Highlights Research Initiatives to Inform a Youth Specific Helmet Standard and A Warning About Counterfeit Lacrosse Balls

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (February 15, 2018) – The National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) met in San Antonio on February 2 to advance athletic equipment safety standards. The NOCSAE Standards Committee voted on a number of technical revisions and modifications to existing standards and Executive Director Mike Oliver discussed the organization’s efforts to stop sales of counterfeit lacrosse balls. In addition, the NOCSAE Scientific Advisory Committee shared an update on two research programs that are currently exploring injury thresholds and biomechanics needed to inform a youth specific helmet standard.

Counterfeit Lacrosse Balls Warning

NOCSAE has been working to stop the sale of counterfeit lacrosse balls by multiple illegitimate vendors, primarily on the Internet. In recent months, NOCSAE has worked with Amazon, GoDaddy and other online shopping platforms to shut down vendors selling lacrosse balls that have not been certified to the NOCSAE standard. In many cases, the lacrosse balls appear to have the proper NOCSAE and SEI logos, but the vendors in question are not registered licensees and the balls fail to meet the NOCSAE standard.

NOCSAE is warning coaches, parents and athletes to use caution when purchasing lacrosse balls. Consumers should not rely solely on the presence of on-ball marking to assess whether lacrosse balls meet the NOCSAE standard. To ensure these products have been certified to the NOCSAE standard, NOCSAE recommends checking the name of the manufacturer and the ball model against the certified product list available on the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) website (www.seinet.org). NOCSAE will continue to provide updates on this issue as new information becomes available.

Youth Specific Helmet Standard

Dr. Robert Cantu, NOCSAE Vice President and Boston University School of Medicine, Clinical Professor Department of Neurosurgery, shared an update on two NOCSAE-funded research contract initiatives to explore potential criteria for a youth football helmet standard. In June 2017, NOCSAE convened a Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) to explore the latest scientific support for a youth football helmet standard and authorized funding for the research initiatives. Virginia Tech is leading one of the research programs to collect biomechanical and clinical data directly from youth football players using helmets instrumented with helmet-mounted accelerometers arrays (HITS). The second research program is being conducted by the Neurotrauma Impact Science Laboratory at the University of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada to investigate potential test parameters for a youth football helmet standard based on observed youth football impact dynamics.



NOCSAE's existing football helmet standard applies to players of all sizes and helmets that are small enough to be worn by "youth players" are required to be tested on a biofidelic head form that replicates the head of a 50th percentile 10-year-old male. At this time, there is insufficient data to suggest a distinct helmet mass limit for youth or other similar performance changes would provide more injury protection, or would protect against injury risks not already addressed. NOCSAE will not develop a youth helmet standard without solid science from which we can conclude that taking an action such as limiting helmet mass will not present an increased risk of injury or otherwise prohibit the helmet from effectively addressing rotational acceleration-induced injuries.

Revisions and Modifications to Standards

The Standards Committee also voted on several revisions and modifications to existing standards. These updates included revised criteria for projectiles used in a range of tests and revised performance specifications for faceguards. For the standard pneumatic ram test for football helmets, NOCSAE also voted to restrict the impact area and remove the facemask as a point of initial contact for random impact locations.

More information on all NOCSAE standards is available at www.nocsae.org.

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About NOCSAE

NOCSAE, the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment, is an independent and nonprofit standards development body with the mission to enhance athletic safety through scientific research and the creation of performance standards for athletic equipment. Formed in 1969, NOCSAE is a leading force in the effort to improve athletic equipment and, as a result, reduce injuries. NOCSAE efforts include the development of performance and test standards for football helmets, gloves and facemasks, baseball and softball batter's and catcher's helmets, baseballs and softballs, ice hockey helmets, soccer shin guards, lacrosse helmets and facemasks, and polo helmets. NOCSAE is comprised of a board of directors representing stakeholders from a number of groups – including consumer and end users, equipment manufacturers and reconditioners, athletic trainers, coaches, equipment managers, and academic and sports medicine associations. These diverse interests have joined forces in an attempt to arrive at a common goal of reducing sports-related injuries. NOCSAE is a nonprofit, charitable organization supported by individuals and organizations with an interest in athletics. For more information, please visit www.nocsae.org.

