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NOCSAE Calls on Parents to Be Smart about Their Child's Football Helmet

Parents and athletes should know their helmet, maintain their helmet and prioritize safe play

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (September 16, 2015) – With football season underway, the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) wants parents and athletes to be smart about their football helmet, and about playing safe.

NOCSAE is an independent and nonprofit standard development body with the primary mission to enhance athletic safety through research and standards for athletic equipment. The logo on the back of the helmet that reads, "Meets NOCSAE Standard," means that the helmet model passed the most rigorous science-based performance standards in the world.

The most important fact that every parent should know is that no football helmet completely prevents all head injuries, specifically concussions. Advertising or other media claims that a particular helmet is anti-concussion or concussion-proof are not supported by research and can be misleading and dangerous.

"One piece of advice to parents when considering helmet options is to avoid relying on any single data point, rating or measurement," said Mike Oliver, NOCSAE executive director. "Doing so could lead to inaccurate conclusions that one helmet brand or model guarantees a measurably higher level of concussion protection than another. Or, it could create a potential false sense of security, leading to the misperception that safe play and return-to-play practices aren't as important."

Additionally, any helmet older than two years should be reconditioned and recertified to the NOCSAE standard.

"Helmets that have been recertified will have a recertification statement and label inside the helmet indicating the name of the recertifying company and the date of recertification," said Christine Barrymore, president of the National Athletic Equipment Reconditioners Association and NOCSAE board member. "If you have doubts on whether or not your child's helmet has been recently recertified, ask your child's coach or school administrator about their policy for reconditioning and recertification."

Helmet reconditioning includes an inspection, cleaning and sanitizing, and the repair and restoration of the equipment to the original performance standard for recertification. If the helmet is older than 10 years, it can no longer be reconditioned or recertified, and a newer helmet should be used.

Beyond the Helmet

While football helmets play an incredibly important role in protecting athletes in the field of play, they are not the only solution to better protection against concussion and other head injuries. Prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management of decisions about when athletes should return to play are equally important.



According to the CDC Foundation's Heads Up to Parents program, making sure equipment fits properly, ensuring young athletes are taught proper blocking and tackling techniques, and demanding enforcement of rules that prohibit players from leading with their helmets to hit other players are important ways to reduce the risk of concussion and other injuries.

Resources for parents:

- NOCSAE - <http://www.nocsae.org>
- CDC Heads Up - <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/>
- USA Football - <http://usafootball.com/>

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About NOCSAE

NOCSAE, the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment, is an independent and nonprofit standard-setting body with the sole mission to enhance athletic safety through scientific research and the creation of performance standards for protective equipment. Formed in 1970, 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.

