

NEWS

For Immediate Release:

May 17, 2012

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NOCSAE joins unprecedented partnership to replace 13,000 youth football helmets in underserved communities

OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS, May 17, 2012 – The National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) joins forces with sport entities and sporting goods manufacturers to launch the Youth Football Safety and Helmet Replacement Partnership, an initiative to replace 13,000 youth football helmets that are 10 years old or older and replace them with new helmets at no cost to the beneficiary leagues in underserved communities. The program, spearheaded by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), also aims to increase player safety by arming coaches with the latest educational information related to player safety, including concussion protection, assessment and management.

The Partnership's pilot program will launch in four markets in July: the Bay Area, Gulf Coast region, Northern Ohio and New York's tri-state area. NOCSAE, an independent and nonprofit standard-setting body with the sole mission of enhancing athlete safety through scientific research and the creation of performance standards for protective equipment, will evaluate these helmets to understand better the performance over time of youth football helmets and to inform a potential youth football helmet standard.

"NOCSAE is pleased to participate in this unprecedented partnership that provides new helmets to young athletes in underserved communities," said Mike Oliver, NOCSAE executive director. "This program also provides NOCSAE with a unique opportunity to leverage helmets collected from the field in our ongoing research efforts. This effort further supports our mission to drive the science of sports medicine so youth and adults who choose to play sports can know their equipment is certified to standards based on the best available information, and to inform potential standards for youth football helmets."

NOCSAE is a leading nongovernmental source for research funding in all sports medicine and science related to concussion in sports. Since 1995 NOCSAE has devoted more than \$5 million toward concussion specific research by the foremost experts in sports medicine and science to develop and advance athlete safety.

The NFL, NFL Players Association (NFLPA), National College Athletic Association (NCAA) and NOCSAE have committed a combined total of approximately \$1 million to the program in its first year. The program was initiated by the CPSC with the hope that it can be expanded in subsequent years.

The partnership includes a robust educational program from the Center for Disease Control and USA Football that includes materials on concussion awareness, proper helmet fitting and fundamentally-sound football instruction with USA Football's Tackle Progression Model and Levels of Contact module. In addition, participation in the program requires league coaches complete USA Football's Level 1 coaching course.

NOCSAE joins the NFL, USA Football, Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NFLPA, National Athletic Equipment Reconditioning Association (NAERA), NCAA, Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA), Rawlings, Riddell, Schutt and Xenith in moving this program forward.

Football helmets certified to NOCSAE standards and properly maintained play an incredibly important role in protecting athletes, improved protective equipment is not the only solution to providing better protection against concussion. Prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management decisions about when athletes should return to play, and enforcing the rules of play to eliminate the use of the head as the first point of contact, are equally or more important and can be rapidly implemented. For the most reliable information regarding helmets and concussion and injury protection and prevention, NOCSAE encourages athletes and parents to carefully review:

- Hang tags that come with all new football helmets that address the helmet's abilities and limitations
- Informational booklets developed by manufacturers that contain critical information about the helmet's abilities and limitations, proper use, fitting and maintenance.
- Warning information that is prominently affixed to the exterior of every helmet and contained in the materials that accompany every new helmet.
- Free downloadable resources created by the Centers for Disease Control regarding concussion recognition, response and prevention. Those resources can be found at www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/.

For more information, please visit www.nocsae.org. To learn more about the new partnership or apply for helmets, visit www.usafootball.com/playersafety.

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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 and facemasks, baseball and softball batters and catchers helmets, baseballs and softballs, ice hockey helmets, soccer shin guards, lacrosse helmets and facemasks and polo helmets. NOCSAE is comprised of representatives from a number of groups which have an interest in athletic equipment – including manufacturers, reconditioners, athletic trainers, coaches, equipment managers, sports medicine and consumer organizations. 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.