

For Immediate Release

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NOCSAE Winter Standards Meeting Update **NOCSAE BEGINS FORMAL PROCESS TO DEVELOP** **A YOUTH FOOTBALL HELMET PERFORMANCE STANDARD**

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (March 10, 2020) — The National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) held its winter public meeting in Phoenix on January 31. The Standards Committee took steps to advance and update athletic equipment safety standards for a range of sports, including a key vote to formally begin the development process for a youth football helmet performance standard. This vote was the culmination of input from NOCSAE’s Scientific Advisory Committee and findings from two recent youth football research studies funded by NOCSAE. The new standard development process begins with a “proposed” new standard which is the first step in a multi-year effort to develop and refine performance and test criteria. The standard will remain in “proposed” status for a minimum of twelve months, during which time NOCSAE invites all interested parties to [submit comments, objections and suggestions](#).

The Standards Committee also discussed the potential need for new equipment standards for football shoulder pads and flag football head protection.

Background on the Proposed New Youth Football Helmet Performance Standard

For more than ten years, NOCSAE has worked to develop a youth football helmet standard that is *evidence-based*. In 2017, NOCSAE’s [Scientific Advisory Committee \(SAC\)](#) recommended two research initiatives to determine the magnitude and frequency of head impacts for youth football players ages 5 to 10 and 11 to 14 years old and explore potential criteria for a youth helmet football standard. The NOCSAE board agreed and provided a total of \$493,000 in funding to support the research.

At the meeting in Phoenix, Dr. Blaine Hoshizaki, Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Ottawa and Dr. Steve Rowson, Associate Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics at Virginia Tech presented findings from these youth tackle football studies. Dr. Hoshizaki’s team studied head impacts among 60 youth football players and Dr. Rowson’s research provided critical insights on biomechanics of concussion in youth players. The findings helped the Technical Director to develop a preliminary test protocol for a youth football helmet.

After discussions and input from interested parties during the meeting, the Standards Committee voted to move forward with developing a football helmet standard specific to youth players. The NOCSAE Standards Committee recognizes there are significant concerns and questions about risks related to youth tackle football shared by diverse stakeholders, as well as ongoing policy discussions across the country about how best to address and manage these risks. In fact, some members of the NOCSAE Standards Committee support recommendations to prohibit tackle football for youth under a certain age to minimize these risks. However, as long as youth continue to play this sport, NOCSAE believes it has a responsibility to advance the development of a youth helmet football performance standard that is *evidence-based*.

For the purpose of the standard, youth is defined as those who have not yet reached high school. The proposed new standard (ND006-20) will remain in “proposed” status for a minimum of twelve months, during which



NOCSAE invites all interested parties to provide input through its website or by email. NOCSAE expects the proposed standard to undergo significant changes in the development process which will likely take several years. A copy of the proposed standard is available for review at this [link](#). More information about the SAC and the research studies is also available in NOCSAE's [Youth Helmet Football Standard Research and Development Update](#).

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.

Updates to Existing Standards

The Standards Committee approved minor modifications to existing standards, including technical clarifications for the pneumatic ram test standard and a proposed revision to the headform positioning to be used during impact attenuation tests. The technical director also provided an update on analysis of data and outcomes related to the mechanical chest surrogate used in testing for the commotio cordis chest protector standard.

Potential New Equipment Safety Standards for Flag Football and Football Shoulder Pads

The Standards Committee agreed to continue evaluating the possibility of developing new equipment performance standards for flag football head and face protection, and for football shoulder pads. Flag football is currently one of the fastest growing team sports and allows players of all ages to enjoy the game without many of the injury risks associated with tackle football. Preliminary data suggest that occasionally serious head and facial injury occurs from unanticipated contact with other players and impacts with the ground, and that many of these injuries are preventable. NOCSAE is also considering possible criteria for a performance standard for football shoulder pads. Recent data suggest that a significant percentage of concussions occur from shoulder pad impacts to the helmet of the concussed player, and NOCSAE is exploring the feasibility and potential efficacy of shoulder pad performance as related to reducing head accelerations in those circumstances.

Counterfeit Lacrosse Balls

NOCSAE continues to take aggressive steps to stop the sale of counterfeit lacrosse balls by certain vendors, primarily on the internet. Over the last few years, NOCSAE has worked with Amazon, GoDaddy and other online shopping platforms to shut down vendors selling lacrosse balls that have NOCSAE and SEI certification language and logos, but which have not been certified to the NOCSAE standard. NOCSAE warns coaches, parents and athletes to use caution when purchasing lacrosse balls, particularly online. Consumers should not rely on the presence of logos 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 in 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.

Information about NOCSAE's recent consumer alert regarding "KSONE" lacrosse balls is available at this [link](#).

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 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.

