

For Immediate Release

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NOCSAE Winter Standards Meeting Update: NOCSAE Advances Proposed Youth Football Standard Process and Approves Revisions to Standards

The board also shared updates on the Nine Array Headform redesign, which is expected to begin testing later this year.

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (February 17, 2021) — The National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) held its winter public meeting virtually on January 29. The Standards Committee addressed updates to athletic equipment safety standards for a range of sports, advanced discussions on the proposed youth football helmet standard and addressed revisions to several existing NOCSAE standards.

SAC Update on Proposed New Youth Football Helmet Performance Standard

In January of last year, the Standards Committee voted to continue moving forward with development of a football helmet standard specific to youth players, titled the **Standard Performance Specification for Newly Manufactured Youth Football Helmets (ND006-20)**. 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. Youth Football is defined as football played by persons who have not yet reached high school, or who are participating in youth football. 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 generally tested on a biofidelic head form that is similar to a 50th percentile 10-year-old male.

At the meeting on January 29, Dr. Robert Cantu presented on behalf of the SAC, who recommended that there be a single standard for all youth helmets but within the standard, helmets be tested at two different impact speeds, each with a different pass/fail threshold based on the player age group. Further discussion is required to implement this as part of the standard.

The proposed standard is expected to undergo significant changes in the development process which could take several more years. 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**. A copy of the proposed standard is available for review at this [link](#). More information about the SAC and the referenced



research studies is also available in NOCSAE's [Youth Helmet Football Standard Research and Development Update](#).

Request for Proposal on Shoulder Pads

Within the meeting, Dr. Cantu also shared a draft of the Request for Proposal (RFP) produced by the Scientific Advisory and RFP Committees regarding shoulder pads. The goal is to identify injury data regarding the possible role of shoulder pads and determine whether such data is sufficient to support the development of a shoulder pad standard for injuries not limited to the shoulder. An official Request for Proposal, was refined and approved during the subsequent NOCSAE board meeting on Jan. 29, 2021.

Update on New Headforms

When NOCSAE was established in 1970, it recognized the need for more precise testing and data collection systems. These goals were reached with the design and creation of the first NOCSAE headform, which was an innovative humanoid headform. The NOCSAE headforms allow for variable mass testing depending on helmet size and provides for a biofidelic headform response. NOCSAE is the only sports standards organization to require a biofidelic headform for testing. The original NOCSAE headform has been upgraded several times over the years to improve biofidelity and durability.

In Spring 2020, NOCSAE finalized an extensive improved CAD design that makes the headform even more biofidelic, which includes more central space to accommodate multiple types of data collection sensors and arrays. The design files were submitted to a mold maker to create new molds that will be used to manufacture and validate the new headforms. At the January meeting, the technical director reported that initial molds for the medium-sized headform will arrive in June with testing to follow. These tests will determine any adjustments needed to finalize the small- and large-size headforms.

Proposed Revisions to Existing Standards

The Standards Committee voted on several revisions to existing NOCSAE standards, including:

- **ND200-20 Commotio Cordis protector testing:** Revising the test protocol for the performance standard, which included revising the impact area and load cell locations to facilitate better testing of multiple size protectors.
- **ND022-20a, ND024-20, ND029-20, ND072-20:** Approved a revision that added a compression deflection upper limit of 400 pounds for softballs used in the impact testing.

The proposed commotio cordis and softball projectile specification revisions were approved by the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee specified an effective date of January 30, 2022 for these revisions, although manufacturers may choose to comply with these revisions before that date.

Affirmation of Existing Standards

At the meeting, the Standards Committee voted to reaffirm the Performance Specification for Recertified Batter's Helmets **ND026-11m15a** for five years and confirmed the batters' helmets performance specification (ND026 –11m15a) would stay in its current form.



The Committee also approved a motion requesting that the NOCSAE technical director conduct research to determine if the useful life date included on labels for non-recertifiable helmets provides effective guidance for consumers on when helmets need to be replaced, or if changes are recommended to provide more clarity.

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.

