

For Immediate Release

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NOCSAE Summer Standards Meeting Update: NOCSAE Reports Progress on Youth Football Helmet Standard and the Redesign of Nine Array Headforms

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (Aug. 9, 2022) — The National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) convened its Summer Meeting on July 22 in Portland, Oregon, welcoming remote and in-person attendees. The meeting included reports from the Scientific Advisory Committee chair on the latest understanding of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) and the research director on injuries in non-tackle youth football. The Standards Committee also took voting action on revisions and modifications for the Commotio Cordis Test Method Standard and the Proposed Youth Football Helmet Performance Standard. The technical director also shared an update on the redesign of NOCSAE's nine array headforms.

Scientific Advisory Committee Report

Dr. Robert Cantu, MA, MD, FACS, FACSM, FAANS, NOCSAE vice president, chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee and representative of the American College of Sports Medicine, shared a report on the latest understanding of CTE. The report examined new research efforts to diagnose CTE in the living through a multiyear collaboration that includes international clinical experts and research institutions. A breakthrough in diagnosing CTE in living persons would allow clinicians to advance clinical trials for treatment. If successful, this could help detect the disease earlier in its course and provide a path to prevention.

NOCSAE Research

As part of NOCSAE's mission to enhance athletic safety through scientific research, the board of directors oversees a long-standing formal Research Grant Funding program. In 2021, NOCSAE added a targeted research function that solicits Requests for Proposals on specific topics of immediate interest. NOCSAE patterns its research grant funding program on the NIH model and has awarded over \$13 million toward research since 1994. In January 2022, the board unanimously voted to reactivate the small grants program to fund research under \$50,000. More information about NOCSAE research programs and current opportunities to submit grant applications is available [here](#).

In 2021, former NOCSAE board member, Kim D. Barber Foss PhD ATC, was appointed to the role of [NOCSAE Research Director](#). Dr. Barber Foss has published extensively in the areas of injury epidemiology, biomechanics and brain injury, and has 29 years of experience as a certified athletic trainer. She is currently an associate research scientist at the Emory University Sports Performance and Research Center and earned her PhD in Health Science earlier this year. At the Summer Standards Committee Meeting, Dr. Barber Foss presented key findings from her dissertation, *An Epidemiological Assessment of Youth Flag Football Injuries*. The study

examines injuries in flag football, which is often promoted as a safer alternative to tackle football. Dr. Barber Foss found that while injuries in flag football are less frequent than tackle football, they are still not without consequence. The research findings are helping to inform the Standards Committee's ongoing evaluation of the need for a headgear standard for non-tackle football.

Procedures for Adoption and Implementation of NOCSAE Standards

As an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Accredited Standards Developer, NOCSAE standards adoption procedures follow the ANSI Essential Requirements due process to insure fairness, transparency and consensus.

All NOCSAE standards follow the following development path: 1) Draft, 2) Proposed and 3) Final Document. Public input on NOCSAE standards is welcomed and encouraged at every step of the process, in accordance with ANSI requirements. Changes to NOCSAE standards are classified as modifications or revisions.

- **Modifications** include minor document changes that do not affect the pass/fail of a product and are effective immediately following a vote of the Standards Committee. Modifications do not require a vote of the Standards Committee.
- **Revisions** are substantive changes that may affect the pass/fail status of a product.

More information about the NOCSAE standards adoption and implementation procedures is available [here](#).

Standards Updates

- **Comotio Cordis Test Method ([ND200-22m22](#))**
 - **Modification:** The Standards Committee acknowledged a modification to replace a test surrogate illustration that was inadvertently removed from the document.
- **Change to Proposed Youth Football Helmet Performance Standard ([ND006-21](#))**
 - **Changes:** The Standards Committee **approved two changes** including:
 - Change to Section 7.2 that clarifies the pneumatic ram test equipment should be used for testing, consistent with ND081 Section 6.13.
 - Changed the pneumatic ram pass/fail test criteria from 2,000 rad/s² to 5,000 rad/s² based on input from the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Southern Impact Research Center testing of current youth models.
 - **Round Robin Testing:** The technical director shared that youth-specific ram equipment is available for manufacturers to order to replace the current Biokinetics equipment. Parties interested in participating in the round robin should order equipment from the technical director. To do so, please contact estordahl@soimpact.com or emccalley@soimpact.com.

Nine Array Headform Redesign

NOCSAE was a pioneer in the development of variable mass biofidelic headforms that model the biomechanics of a human head, including the impedance and harmonics caused by an actual impact. The NOCSAE headforms allow for more accurate testing of helmets and projectiles. In 2020, NOCSAE finalized plans to redesign the headforms with enhanced biofidelity and testing capabilities. At the Summer Standards Committee Meeting, the technical director provided an update on the status of the new headforms and next steps for testing. The design of the headforms had to be updated over the last year since several of the materials used in the original headforms are no longer available. In the last few months, the technical director has received one headform in each size with the new materials and has begun preliminary validation testing. Testing will continue in the coming months, and the technical director will provide a report at the 2023 Winter Standards Committee Meeting.

Potential Non-Tackle Football Headgear Standard

The Standards Committee continues to evaluate the potential development of a non-tackle football helmet standard. The Committee is considering the range of non-contact football sports, from flag football to 7v7, and evaluating potential options for a protective equipment standard. Key considerations include how best to protect against facial injuries, whether a soft or hard helmet is appropriate, and if the helmet should be designed for single impact or multi-impacts.

Interested parties are invited to submit comments and questions to NOCSAE Executive Director Mike Oliver at mike.oliver@nocsae.org. Information about all NOCSAE standards and future Standards Committee meetings is available at nocsae.org. The next NOCSAE Standards Committee Meeting will be held in Litchfield Park, Arizona, on Jan. 27, 2023.

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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.