



FOOTBALL HELMET WARNING

The football helmet issued to you from Southwestern College has a warning label(s) attached inside and/or outside the shell which reads as follows:

WARNING: No helmet can prevent all head or neck injuries a player might receive while participating in football. Do not use this helmet to butt, ram, or spear an opposing player. This is in violation of the football rules, and such use can result in severe head or neck injuries, paralysis or death to you and possible injury to your opponent.

On some helmets, the label reads as follows:

WARNING: No helmet can prevent all head or neck injuries a player might receive while participating in football. Do not use this helmet to but, ram, or spear an opposing player. This is in violation of the football rules and can result in severe head, brain, or neck injury, paralysis or death to you and possible injury to your opponent.

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- 1.) Serious head and neck injuries leading to death, permanent brain damage, or quadriplegia (extensive paralysis from injury to the spinal cord at the neck level) occur each year in athletics. The toll is relatively small (less than one fatality for every 100,000 players and an estimated two to three non-fatal severe brain and spinal cord injuries for every 100,000 players), but persistent. They cannot be completely prevented due to the tremendous forces occasionally encountered with collisions, but can be minimized by manufacturer, coach, and player compliance with accepted safety standards.
 - 2.) The NOCSAE seal on a helmet indicates that a manufacturer has complied with the best available engineering standards for head protection. By keeping a proper fit, by not modifying its design, and by reporting to the coach or athletic trainer any need for its maintenance, the athlete is also complying with the purpose of the NOCSAE standard.
 - 3.) The rules against intentional butting, ramming, or spearing the opponent with the helmeted head are there to protect the helmeted person much more than the opponent being hit. The athlete who does not comply with these rules is a candidate for catastrophic injury. For example, no helmet can offer protection to the neck, and quadriplegia now occurs more frequently than brain damage. The helmet cannot always protect you from injuries that may result from slashing or any other kind of direct contact that may occur during play, nor can a helmet protect you from a blow from an opponent that was intentional or accidental.

The typical scenario of this catastrophic injury in football/lacrosse involves lowering one's head while making a tackle/contact. The momentum of the body tries to bend the neck after the helmeted head is stopped by the impact, and the cervical spine cannot be splinted as well by the neck's musculature with the head lowered as with the preferred "face up, eyes forward, neck bulled" position.

- 4.) Because of the impact forces in football/lacrosse, even the "face up" position is no guarantee against head or neck injury. Further, the intent to make contact "face up" is no guarantee that this position can be maintained at the moment of impact. Consequently, the teaching of playing techniques that keep the helmeted head from receiving the brunt of the impact are now required by rule and by coaching ethics. Coaching techniques teach athletes to maintain or regain the "face up" positioning during the course of a play, must be respected by the athletes.

NO HELMET CAN PREVENT ALL SUCH INJURIES

I _____, have read the above and foregoing football helmet warning and that I understand the statements contained therein.

Signature of Student-Athlete: _____ Date: _____