

Testimony of

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Before the House Committee on the Judiciary

“Legal Issues Relating to Football Head Injuries, Part II”

January 4, 2010

Chairman Conyers and Members of the Committee:

My name is Scott Hallenbeck. I am the executive director of USA Football, the sport's national governing body on youth and amateur levels.

Approximately 3.0 million American youngsters aged 6-14 and 500,000 adult volunteers power youth tackle football, making it one of our country's most popular youth sports. USA Football is an independent non-profit organization with members residing in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Our members are youth football coaches, players, league commissioners and football game officials. Within our spectrum of responsibility is to lead and serve the youth football community. We do this in several ways, including giving information in the area of health and safety through our work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

USA Football was endowed by the National Football League (NFL) and the NFL Players Association (NFLPA) in 2002 through the NFL Youth Football Fund. The NFL Youth Football Fund is a non-profit foundation created by the NFL and NFLPA in 1998. I have served as USA Football's executive director since 2005.

Twenty-six (26) youth sports organizations, including USA Football, have worked with the CDC for more than two years to educate the youth sports community on concussion awareness and management. USA Football will continue to make this a point of emphasis in 2010. In fact, USA Football's CDC-approved 2010 concussion awareness work has already garnered national media attention through a news story written by *The Associated Press* on December 15, 2009. This underscores the public's thirst for additional knowledge and education on this topic.

#### **Summary of USA Football's CDC-Approved Concussion Awareness Information**

USA Football's coaching education curriculum, football training events, and resources provide youth football players, parents, coaches, league commissioners, and game officials with a strong knowledge base of football's fundamentals. Although no physical activity is injury-

proof, coaches who understand how to properly teach blocking and tackling within the rules will foster a positive football experience and will likely lessen the chance of injury.

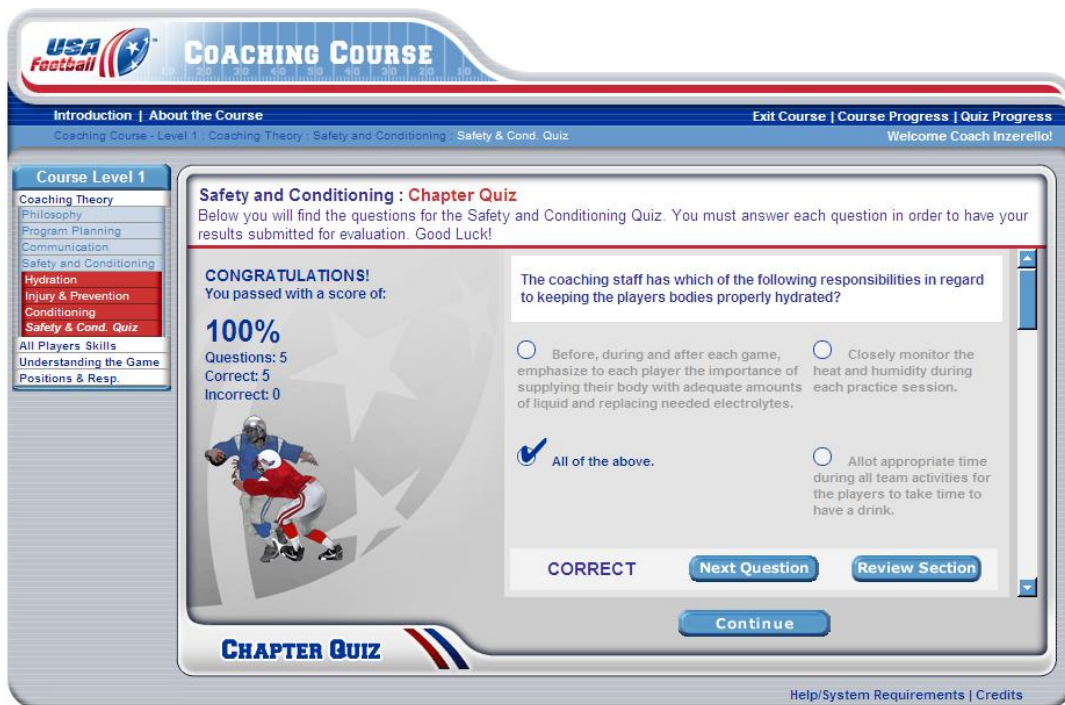
The following summarizes how USA Football, with CDC-approved practices, educates the youth football community on how to recognize a concussion and how to respond if one occurs. This information is promoted on our website – [www.usafootball.com](http://www.usafootball.com) – and will be covered at USA Football’s 2010 training events.

By April 2010, USA Football will add four new chapters to our online youth football coaching course, which presently is composed of 11 chapters and takes approximately two hours to complete. These four new chapters will cover concussion awareness, athlete hydration, equipment-fitting guidelines, and basic football stances. Each new chapter will be followed by a quiz. Every chapter at present is followed by a quiz to strengthen comprehension, results of which can be tracked by a league’s commissioner. To successfully complete the course, coaches must correctly answer at least 80% (38) of the 47 quiz questions. More than 26,000 youth football coaches have successfully completed the course since May 2008.

Screen shots from USA Football’s online coaching course:



**USA Football’s online coaching course, successfully completed by more than 26,000 youth football coaches since May 2008, teaches how to properly coach football fundamentals.**



Following each USA Football coaching course chapter, coaches are quizzed on what they learned. A cumulative score of at least 80% (38 correct answers out of 47) is needed for a passing grade.

Youth sports leagues – not only those pertaining to football – are encouraged to adopt USA Football’s CDC-approved concussion awareness and management policy (below). USA Football recommends that every youth sports league employs a policy such as this:

**Prevention and Preparation for Coaches** (Primary Source: CDC)

- 1) *Educate athletes and parents about concussion*
  - a) Talk with athletes and parents about preventative measures, symptoms, and proper action to take relative to concussions.
  - b) Emphasize the dangers of playing through a concussion.
- 2) *Insist that safety comes first*
  - a) Teach athletes safe playing techniques and good sportsmanship
  - b) Review the “Concussion Fact Sheet for Players” found at [usafootball.com](http://usafootball.com) with players and their parents
- 3) *Teach athletes and parents that it is not safe to play with a concussion*
  - a) Explain that it is not “courageous” nor does it show strength to play with a concussion
- 4) *Prevent long-term problems*
  - a) “When in doubt, sit them out.” Keep athletes with known or suspected concussion off the field until an appropriate health care professional clears them to return. Returning to play must be a medical decision.

**Signs & Symptoms of Concussion** (Primary Source: CDC)

**Observations made by Coaching Staff**

- ❖ Appears dazed or stunned
- ❖ Is confused about assignment or position
- ❖ Forgets plays
- ❖ Unsure of game, score, or opponent
- ❖ Loses consciousness (even briefly)

**Symptoms reported by Athlete**

- ❖ Headache or “pressure” in the head
- ❖ Nausea or vomiting
- ❖ Balance problems or dizziness
- ❖ Double or blurry vision
- ❖ Sensitivity to light or noise

- ❖ Shows behavior or personality changes
- ❖ Can't recall events prior or after the hit or fall
- ❖ Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- ❖ Concentration or memory problems

### **What a Coach Should Do When a Concussion is Suspected (Primary Source: CDC)**

- 1) *Remove the athlete from play*
  - a) Look for signs and symptoms of concussion if an athlete experienced a bump or blow to the head
  - b) "When in doubt, sit them out" – athletes with signs or symptoms of concussion must not return to play
- 2) *Ensure that the athlete is evaluated immediately by an appropriate health care professional*
  - a) Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself
  - b) Coaches recording the following can help a health care professional in assessing the athlete:
    - i) Cause of the injury and the force of the hit or blow to the head
    - ii) Any loss of consciousness and if so, for how long
    - iii) Any memory loss or seizures immediately following the injury
    - iv) Number of previous concussions (if any)
- 3) *Inform the athlete's parents/guardians of the possible concussion and give them the concussion fact sheet for parents found on usafootball.com*
  - a) Ensure that parents know the athlete must be seen by an appropriate healthcare professional
  - b) Provide formal documentation of the injury and notify the league commissioner
- 4) *Allow the athlete to return to play only after an appropriate healthcare professional clears his or her return*
  - a) A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems

### **USA Football Educational Resources & Initiatives**

The following outlines USA Football's educational resources and initiatives, including information distribution channels.

#### **EDUCATION**

- **USA Football Events:** Knowing the game's fundamentals and how to teach them fosters a positive football experience
  - USA Football Coaching Schools: youth coaches are instructed how to teach the sport's fundamentals properly
  - USA Football Player Academies: youth players (aged 7-14) are taught proper football fundamentals
  - USA Football State Leadership Forums: commissioners learn best practices, including insight on concussion
    - All three of these events educate participants on important health and safety issues, including concussion awareness through CDC-authored material. **USA Football stresses that athletes who have or are suspected to have suffered a concussion must not return to play until an appropriate healthcare professional clears them to do so.**
- **USA Football's Online Coaching Education Program for Youth Tackle and Flag Football**
  - USA Football is adding concussion awareness content and quizzes to its online football coaching course by April 2010
    - USA Football's concussion-related course content is created by its Football & Wellness Committee, the CDC, and the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA)
    - USA Football's Football & Wellness Committee is composed of experts in several areas, including player health, hydration, and nutrition
  - USA Football's coaching education course presently includes 11 chapter quizzes, each of which consists of 10 questions. A cumulative score of at least 80% is needed for successful completion.
    - Youth league commissioners can track and confirm coaches' course completions
    - More than 26,000 youth football coaches have completed this course since May 2008
- **National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) "Fundamentals of Coaching Football" Course**

- Produced by USA Football, this course teaches proper coaching fundamentals to America's high school football coaches
- High school head football coaches in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are mandated by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association to successfully complete the NFHS's three-part online coaching curriculum; USA Football's coaching course accounts for one of these three parts.

## **RULES**

- **USA Football Youth Football Rulebook**
  - USA Football has written a youth football rules book with assistance from the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) and the NFHS to establish important youth football standards
  - The USA Football Youth Football Rulebook was distributed to more than 450 youth football league commissioners and beta-tested in 2009 in Northern Virginia. The rulebook will be available on a national basis in 2010.

## **RESEARCH**

- **Annual Participation and Player Health Studies**
  - USA Football continues youth football's most accurate participation study monitoring players, coaches, and teams
  - USA Football will invest annually to execute a study to learn more about youth football injury rates and how they are affected by different standards of play (Age & Weight, Age and Grade-based)

## **CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN 2010**

- USA Football State Leadership Forums: educate 500-plus youth football league commissioners with CDC-authored material
- USA Football Coaching Schools: distribute and review CDC-authored material to more than 5,000 youth coaches
- Player Academies: distribute and review CDC-authored material with youth players and parents
- usafootball.com continues to share a range of important health and safety news for players, parents and coaches

## **USA Football Equipment Grant Program**

USA Football, through financial support provided by the NFL Youth Football Fund, has awarded more than \$2 million in football equipment based on merit and need to youth and high school programs across the United States since 2006. More than 800 youth and high school football programs in 44 states will be assisted through USA Football grants awarded from November 2009 through February 2010 alone.

USA Football equipment grants make youth and high school football safer and compliments programs' existing fundraising endeavors for new equipment. Selected youth leagues choose one of 12 equipment packages, each valued at \$1,000. Selected high school programs also choose one of 12 packages, each valued at \$1,500. Equipment and apparel grants are fulfilled by USA Football national partners.

Dozens of football program leaders have expressed appreciation for our equipment grants:

“This is going to enable a lot more kids to play. This grant keeps kids on the field. It’ll definitely help us and we are so very grateful.”

--Cassandra Jetter-Ivey, Newark (N.J.) North Ward Scorpions Youth Football Program

“We appreciate USA Football's help. This allows a sense of relief that we're keeping our children safe from injury by placing them in new and sturdier helmets. Since we are supporting children who are predominately underprivileged, this assistance is especially valuable as it keeps our registration fees as low as possible.”

--DeAndrea Singleton, Westbury Redskins; Houston, Texas

“The equipment grant we were awarded from USA Football will provide equipment and uniforms to young athletes in low-income, inner-city neighborhoods. Most of the youths are between the ages of 5-12 years and the majority of them are financially disadvantaged. USA Football helps us make a difference in the lives of our kids and we appreciate their non-profit office's support.”

--Steve Billingslea, Middle Tennessee Bulldogs; Nashville, Tenn.

### **USA Football’s Football and Wellness Committee**

USA Football has assembled a Football and Wellness Committee to further promote best practices for America’s youth football community. The committee, composed of 17 experts spanning football coaching, player health, and other areas, will share insight starting in the first quarter of this year with youth football coaches, game officials, league commissioners, youth players, and parents to lead the game’s development and foster a positive football experience for youth and amateur players. The committee’s expertise will be shared with USA Football members through [www.usafootball.com](http://www.usafootball.com), our quarterly *USA Football Magazine*, and our football training events, which are conducted in more than two dozen states.

This committee roster represents a variety of organizations including the American Red Cross, the Andrews Institute, the National Center for Sport Safety, and several medical centers from across the United States. USA Football’s Football & Wellness Committee Members:

<b><u>NAME</u></b>	<b><u>EXPERTISE</u></b>	<b><u>ORGANIZATION</u></b>
Tom Bass	Coaching Expert	USA Football
Dr. Jody Brylinsky	Coaching Performance/Sport Studies	Western Michigan University
Ron Courson	Sports Medicine	University of Georgia
Ted Crites	CPR	American Red Cross
Dr. Ann Grandjean	Nutrition	University of Nebraska Medical Center
Dr. Brad Hatfield	Kinesiology	University of Maryland
Dr. Stan Herring	Concussion	University of Washington
Dr. David Joyner	Medical Expert	Penn State University
Dr. John Lehtinen	Family Medicine	Upper Peninsula (Mich.) Medical Center
Dr. Larry Lemak	Medical Expert	National Center for Safety Initiatives
George Maczuga	Football Equipment & Equipment Fitting	Riddell Sports Group, Inc.
Dr. Joel Morgenlander	Neurology	Duke University Medical Center
Dr. Lonnie Paulos	Orthopedics	The Andrews Institute
Mike Price	Insurance	ESIX, Inc.
Kim Schwabenbauer	Nutrition	Super Bakery
Dr. JohnEric Smith	Hydration	Gatorade Sports Science Institute
Dr. David Yukelson	Cognitive Development	Penn State University

### **Concussion-Related Education**

USA Football works with the CDC to promote concussion-related education materials for its members and the entire youth football community at [www.usafootball.com](http://www.usafootball.com). In addition to the CDC, USA Football is advised by Dr. Stanley Herring on concussion awareness and management. Dr. Herring is a member of USA Football’s Football & Wellness committee and is a board-certified physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist who has been in practice for more than 27 years. Dr. Herring also is a clinical professor in the departments of Rehabilitation Medicine, Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine, and Neurological Surgery at the University of Washington.

Dr. Herring is USA Football’s internal advisor on concussion awareness material for our coaching course, which is shared with the CDC for review prior to being made available to the youth football community. USA Football informs coaches of the CDC-approved message that athletes who are even *suspected* of having suffered a concussion must not return to play until an appropriate health care professional clears them to return. Returning to play must be a medical decision.

USA Football’s State Leadership Forums invite youth football leaders – primarily league commissioners – from throughout a region to meet annually for approximately six hours to discuss and share best practices for the sport’s betterment. At least 500 youth football league



leaders will attend USA Football's 38 state forums in 2010. Each state forum participant will receive a CDC-authored information packet with concussion-related fact sheets, a coach's clipboard, and a concussion awareness and management magnet. Screened onto the clipboard and magnet are concussion signs and symptoms, action steps to be taken if a player is suspected to have suffered a concussion, and a designated space for important phone numbers, such as local hospitals.

USA Football Coaching Schools are full-day coaching clinics designed exclusively for youth football coaches. USA Football will conduct 37 of these events in 2010, drawing a cumulative attendance of more than 5,000 coaches. Each coach in attendance will receive a clipboard sticker created jointly by USA Football and the CDC mirroring the concussion awareness information screened onto the CDC-created clipboards at our state forums.

Ten (10) USA Football Player Academies are scheduled for this summer (2010). These three-day player camps are designed for youth players aged 7-14. During each academy's orientation session on the camp's first day, with parents invited to be present, USA Football will discuss concussion awareness and distribute two concussion fact sheets – one for youth athletes and another for youth sports parents. Both fact sheets were created by the CDC and are available through [usafootball.com](http://usafootball.com).

### **Youth Football Injury Research**

Due to several factors, including youth football's fragmented landscape, youth football injury research is scant. Beginning with the 2010 football season, USA Football will invest annually to learn more about youth football injury rates and study how these rates are affected by different standards of play (age & weight, age & unlimited weight, grade-based, etc.). Parameters of this 2010 study will be promoted by USA Football once they are determined.

### **Existing Legislation**

On May 14, 2009, through the work of a coalition comprised of the Brain Injury Association of Washington (BIAWA), the University of Washington, Harborview Medical Center,

Seattle Children's Hospital, the CDC, and other partners in sports and medicine, a new Washington state law was passed to protect young athletes from death or disability caused by premature return to play following a concussion.

The Lystedt Law is named in honor of Zackery Lystedt, a Seattle-area youngster who when he was 13 years old in 2006 suffered a concussion during a middle school football game. After returning to the same game, he later collapsed on the field suffering from a brain hemorrhage.

The American College of Sports Medicine has joined forces with the Washington state coalition partners mentioned above to advocate for legislation similar to the Lystedt Law on state or national levels that can work to require:

- Information handouts to parents and players on the signs and symptoms of concussion; returned and signed by parents and youth athletes acknowledging the risk of concussion and head injuries prior to practice or competition.
- Removal of a youth athlete who is suspected of or sustains a concussion or head injury from play – “When in doubt, sit them out.”
- Written clearance prior to returning to play from a licensed health care provider knowledgeable in the diagnosis and management of concussion for a youth athlete who has been removed from play.
- Compliance from private, non-profit youth sports associations with the policies adopted in that state.

Laws like this one cannot stop an initial concussion from happening on a football or soccer field, a basketball court, a baseball diamond, or a hockey rink, but they can help keep damaging repeated concussions from happening in all of these places.

USA Football supports this legislation. We are interested to be part of a larger concussion awareness and management alliance for the betterment of America's youth sports and would encourage other sports' national governing bodies to join us.

Concussion is not relegated to football – or even boys’ athletics. According to a study titled, “Concussions Among United States High School and Collegiate Athletes” in the Journal of Athletic Training in 2007, concussion rates per 1,000 athlete exposures were as follows (an “athlete exposure” is one practice or one game):

- Football: 0.47
- Girls Soccer: 0.36
- Boys Soccer: 0.22
- Girls Basketball: 0.21
- Boys Basketball: 0.07

These numbers underscore the need for all sports to recognize the seriousness of concussions and the need for further education among our coaches, league administrators, game officials, athletes, and parents.

### **More Education Needed**



Concussion awareness, even within the medical community, is limited. I was recently alerted to the fact that the CDC has created a concussion fact sheet for doctors. This drives the point that consistent nomenclature and the coordinated cooperation of all youth sports stakeholders is necessary to continue this positive change that we are experiencing in youth sports relative to concussion.

Thank you for inviting me to appear here today. I am pleased to answer any questions.

## APPENDIX

# HEADS UP

## CONCUSSION IN FOOTBALL


  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION


### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Athletes who experience any of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

Signs Observed by Coaching Staff	Symptoms Reported by Athlete
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or "pressure" in head
Is confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can't recall events prior to hit or fall	Confusion
Can't recall events after hit or fall	Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"

For more information and safety resources, visit [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion) or [www.usafootball.com](http://www.usafootball.com).

### ACTION PLAN

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, you should take the following four steps:

1. Remove athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health care professional says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

#### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

**Emergency Medical Services**  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Health Care Professional**  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**School Staff Available During Practice**  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**School Staff Available During Games**  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT

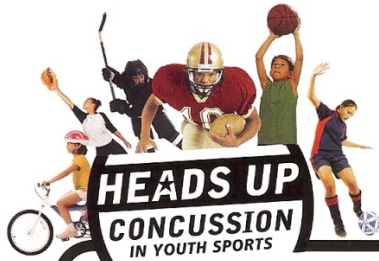
January 2010

USA Football will conduct 37 full-day Coaching Schools in 25 states in 2010, designed for youth football coaches. Each coach will receive this clipboard sticker regarding concussion awareness and management, created by USA Football and the CDC. USA Football anticipates more than 5,000 youth football coaches to attend its 2010 Coaching Schools.

This same information, screened onto 9" x 13" clipboards and 6" x 8.25" refrigerator magnets, will be given to youth football league commissioners and administrators at USA Football's 38 State Leadership Forums in 2010, spanning 27 states.

## APPENDIX (con't)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



### A Fact Sheet for **ATHLETES**

#### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

#### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light
- Bothered by noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

#### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.

- **Get a medical check up.** A doctor or health care professional can tell you if you have a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.

#### HOW CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
  - The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
  - Worn correctly and fit well
  - Used every time you play

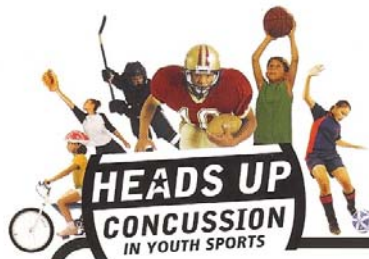
*It's better to miss one game than the whole season.*

For more information and to order additional materials **free-of-charge**, visit:  
[www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports](http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports)

For more detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury, visit:  
[www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury)

**USA Football will conduct 10 three-day Player Academies in 2010 in nine states. These are football clinics for youth players aged 7-14. During an orientation session on the event's first day, which parents may attend, each youngster will receive this CDC-produced concussion fact sheet for athletes. The document's reverse side displays this information in Spanish.**

This fact sheet will also be included in a CDC-produced concussion awareness information kit, distributed to all USA Football State Leadership Forum attendees in 2010 (38 events in 27 states).  
**APPENDIX (con't)**



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
 CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



A Fact Sheet for **PARENTS**

**WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?**

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

**WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?**

**Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians**

*If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:*

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

**Symptoms Reported by Athlete**

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

**HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?**

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

**WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?**

- 1. Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.
- 2. Keep your child out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play until a health care professional says it’s OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- 3. Tell your child’s coach about any recent concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

*It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.*

For more information and to order additional materials **free-of-charge**, visit:  
[www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports](http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports)

For more detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury, visit:  
[www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury)

A CDC-produced concussion fact sheet for parents (above) will be distributed in 2010 to all parents who attend a USA Football Player Academy orientation session as well as youth football leaders who attend USA Football’s State Leadership Forums. The document’s reverse side displays this information in Spanish.

CDC-produced concussion awareness fact sheets, designed for youth sports coaches, athletes, and parents, are accessible through USA Football's website, [www.usafootball.com](http://www.usafootball.com). More than 850,000 unique visitors were drawn to usafootball.com in 2009.