
Directions:

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading. Mark up the text with questions and comments.
3. A one page reflection is due on Friday. It may be typed and saved in the AoW folder of your GoogleDocs collection, or hand-written neatly on lined paper.

“Young Football Players are taking Big-League Hits”
Source: Imani M. Cheers/ PBS Newshour/ April 05, 2012

Kids who play football make -- and take -- hits to the head just as hard as any high school, college or NFL player, according to a new study. While concussions are common in football among players of all ages, researchers are aiming to reduce those risks through stronger helmets and a new rating system.

Football is popular-and risky

Every fall, 1.2 million high school football players suit up for another season on the gridiron. While the **lure** of “Friday Night Lights” excites towns big and small throughout the country, the pressure to compete has left many players with life-threatening head injuries. According to a New York Times report, 50 percent of high school football players have suffered at least one concussion and 35 percent have had more than one concussion.

Since 1997, at least 50 high school or younger football players in more than 20 states have died or suffered serious head traumas on the field.

In 2001, 17-year-old Matthew Colby died of bleeding and swelling in his brain after suffering a concussion two weeks prior. In 2003, Taylor Davison, 10, the only girl in a pee-wee league, was hit in the head during a scrimmage at her school. After complaining of dizziness and a headache, she died from a subdural hematoma, or bleeding in the brain.

Can stronger helmets prevent brain injuries?

Football helmets can’t prevent concussions, but a new study out of Temple University in Philadelphia reports that certain types of helmets may decrease risks of traumatic brain injuries.

"The occurrence of concussion has been constant for the past 30 years: whether it was a leather helmet, whether it was a plastic helmet with web suspension, whether it was a plastic helmet with foam, or one with the new combination air cells and padding," said study author Dr. Joseph Torg, an adjunct professor of orthopedic surgery at Temple.

The researchers examined data from the U.S. National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance System from 2005 to 2009. Of the nearly 1,400 kids who sustained a concussion, 44 lost consciousness and 267 experienced amnesia.

Injury reports addressed helmet fit, type of inner-helmet padding and whether the helmet was new or reconditioned.

"Youngsters who had a concussion, if the helmet fit, they had 82 percent less chance of loss of consciousness," Torg said. "Helmets -- and advanced helmet technology -- do not prevent against concussions or the severe intracranial injuries of hemorrhage [bleeding] and brain swelling."

Bi-partisan bill aims to protect players

In 2011, New Mexico Senator Tom Udall and New Jersey Rep. Bill Pascrell unveiled a bipartisan bill called the Children's Sports Athletic Equipment Safety Act. It aimed to protect young football players, ages 18 and younger, from the dangers of sports-related brain injuries.

The legislation specifically focuses on the use of older helmets, which **gradually** wear out and offer less head and brain protection as years of hard play go by. If passed, the bill would order that new and reconditioned helmets must be tested by a third party to ensure their safety. The legislation also specifically addresses the prevention of concussions in children younger than 12.

"These are good steps to take for player safety," said Sandkamp. "Helmets definitely reduce the **incidence** of concussion. They won't take care of the whole problem, but they certainly help."

Awareness of head injuries is critical

Often, a person who suffers a blow to the head does not know they have a concussion, which makes it very important that people who witness the event alert adults and urge the victim to seek medical attention. Symptoms include memory loss, feeling dizzy or dazed, vomiting, headaches, blurred vision, slurred speech, feeling overly tired, difficulty concentrating and loss of balance.

Reflection Ideas

- In your opinion, is there a way to make school sports safer, or are these risks just a part of playing the game?
- Should the Children's Sports Athletic Equipment Safety Act be passed? Explain why or why not.
- Who is the intended audience of this article? Explain.
- Find a passage from the article and explain why it grabbed your attention.

Young Players are taking Big-League Hits

Reading questions

- Using the article, answer the following questions
 - Use outside sources (Internet, newspaper) if needed
1. What percentage of high school football players have had at least one concussion? What percentage of players have had more than one concussion?
 2. Prior to reading this story, did you know there was a high number of head injuries related to high school football?
 3. In your opinion, is there a way to make school sports safer, or are these risks just a part of playing the game? Explain your answer.
- injuries tend to happen in sports

Vocabulary builder

- Find each vocabulary word in the article. Copy down the sentence in which it appears. Make a guess as to the definition of the word. Find the dictionary definition. Finally, create an illustration or original sentence using the proper meaning of the word
- Use the example below to help you

Word- gradually
Context- The legislation specifically focuses on the use of older helmets, which gradually wear out and offer less head and brain protection as years of hard play go by
Guess- something that happens over a period of time
Dictionary definition- advancing or progressing by regular or continuous degrees
Illustration or original sentence- After two months of running, I gradually built up enough endurance to run five miles.

Word
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