

"Home of the Golden Knights"



# Union School District

## UNION HIGH SCHOOL

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## UNION JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL INJURY WARNING

### FOOTBALL

Many statistics are kept in the sport of football. This benefits the fans, players, and coaches. One of the statistics kept is on the injuries that occur during the season. They are never as glamorous as the game statistics, but nonetheless, they are real.

In 1982, data available revealed there were 24 catastrophic injuries and 7 deaths involved in football at all levels: youth, interscholastic and intercollegiate (Meuller and Blyth 1983). Although this is a very small percentage of participants, many other people are affected, such as family, friends, and coaches. Football is a contact sport and injuries will occur. The coaches working in our program are well qualified, professional people. Fundamentals related to playing football will continually and repeatedly be emphasized on and off the field.

#### Possible Catastrophic Injuries

Since blocking and tackling are basically the same technique, they will be looked at simultaneously. The most common injuries occurring during blocking and tackling are those involving the head and neck. One of these, the concussion, can lead to brain damage or death. A cervical injury to vertebrae one through seven can cause paraplegia, quadriplegia or even death. Blocking and tackling with the head down (neck in flexed position) and hitting an opponent's thigh or knee, or hitting the ground, can cause one or both of these injuries. Also, blocking and tackling with the head hyper-extended while hitting an opponent's thigh, knee, or the ground can result in catastrophic head and neck injury.

#### Warnings

Every athlete should be warned of the possible dangers involved when not performing the technique properly. In addition, since collisions among players occur frequently, and are inherent in the sport of football, the athlete and the parents or guardian should also be notified both in writing and verbally of the potential danger in participating in the game of football. The coaches are aware of potential danger and will use proper methods to teach the techniques of blocking and tackling. There is, however, no guarantee that a catastrophic injury, including paraplegia or quadriplegia, will not occur.

#### Equipment

Shoulder pads, helmets, hip pads, pants including pads and knee pads must have proper fitting and use.

Shoulder pads which are too small will leave the shoulder point vulnerable to bruises or separations; it could also be too tight in the neck area resulting in a possible pinched nerve. Shoulder pads which are too large will leave the neck area poorly protected and will slide on the shoulders making them vulnerable to bruises or separations.

Helmets must fit snugly at the contact points: front, back and top of head. The helmet must be safety NOCSAE branded; the chin straps must be fastened and the cheek pads must be of the proper thickness. On contact, too tight a helmet could result in a headache. Too loose a fit could result in headaches, a concussion, a face injury such as a broken nose or cheek bone, a blow to the neck causing a neck injury, possibly quite serious such as paralysis or even death.

Activity Skill Technique	Possible Injury(s)	Cause(s)	Prevention: Proper Instruction	Safety Hints
Blocking, tackling	Cervical injury, vertebrae 1-7, paraplegia, quadriplegia, death	Blocking or tackling with head down. Neck in inflexioned position. Hitting knee or thigh. Blocking or tackling with head in hyper-extension. Hit square with head in numbers of opponent.	Head and eyes up; hit with shoulders. Keep hips under center of gravity, prevents spearing.	Proper fitting approved equipment. Drills to teach proper techniques. Neck exercises to strengthen neck muscles. Strict adherence to rules.
	Concussion, brain damage, death	Hitting or being hit by opponent's head, knee, thigh or ground.	Same as above.	Same as above.
Being speared	Broken ribs, punctured lungs, kidney damage, spleen damage	Being speared by opponent in mid-section or back.	Rules, officials	Use of a "flack jacket" or similar protection
Karate chop (clotheslining)	Cervical injury	Striking head or neck with extended forearm.	Rules, officials	Does not apply

This warning does not cover all potential injury possibilities in playing football, but is an attempt to make the players and parents aware that fundamentals, coaching and proper fitting equipment is important to their safety.

The above information has been explained to me and I understand the list of rules and procedures. I also understand the necessity of using the proper techniques while participating in the football program.

ATHLETE'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_