



# media information



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## **MHSAA Backs Up Message About Sports Safety Issues With Resources**

**EAST LANSING, Mich. – Sept. 18 –** Newspaper headlines about athletes playing through injuries should serve as a call for action, and the Michigan High School Athletic Association has been proactive in providing its schools resources to help promote safe competition.

Head and neck injuries received over 25 percent of the time spent with football coaches during MHSAA preseason rules meetings, emphasizing rule measures taken to promote safety and to show a video provided by the National Athletic Trainers Association. “Heads Up: Reducing the Risk of Head and Neck Injuries in Football,” is the first of two videos being provided this season to member schools on the topic. A second video will shortly be sent to MHSAA member schools from Henry Ford Health Systems – “Sports Head Injuries,” which provides information applicable to all sports.

Previous similar projects the MHSAA has been involved in include: teaming up with the Brain Injury Association of Michigan in 2000 to distribute 20,000 sports concussion cards to member schools, and assisting in the development and distribution of the brochure “Head Up, Eyes Forward” printed by the Michigan Department of Community Health for use by parents in preventing football injuries; in 2002, the video “See What You Hit” was provided to schools in cooperation with the Spine in Sports Foundation; and the kit, “Heads Up – Concussion In High School Sports” was distributed to schools in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2005.

“It’s important to remember that the limited resources of schools may not provide the kind of medical attention necessary to return a young athlete to competition during the latter stages of an event during which any type of an injury had previously occurred,” said John E. “Jack” Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. “Coaches, administrators and parents need to be cautious about returning youngsters to competition, and young people need to be honest with their coaches when they’ve been injured. The educational nature of high school sports demands it.”

In addition to the resources provided to schools, the MHSAA’s Coaches Advancement Program is another venue through which coaches are educated in the basics of the health risks associated with athletic

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participation, and the associated philosophical issues.

“It’s troubling to pick up a paper and read about a high school player stating that it’s not dangerous to play with a concussion and that playing hurt is a sacrifice made for the sake of the team,” Roberts said. “That kind of attitude is as big a threat to the well being of a young athlete as the injury itself. But that attitude comes from somewhere, and it can be stopped by coaches, if coaches adopt an educational mindset about the purpose of these games.”

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,600 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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**SPORTS/NEWS DIRECTORS** – Here are links to some resources referenced in this release:

- **VIDEO** - Heads Up: Reducing the Risk of Head and Neck Injuries in Football – <http://www.mhsaanetwork.com> under Featured Broadcasts. Video produced by the National Athletic Trainers Association. (nata.org)
- **MULTIMEDIA** – Heads Up – High School Sports Concussions – A complete multimedia tool kit provided by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention -- [http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/Coaches\\_Tool\\_Kit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/Coaches_Tool_Kit.htm) . (cdc.gov)
- **VIDEO** – See What You Hit -- <http://www.mhsaa.com/services/seewhat.html> . Video produced by the Spine In Sports Foundation.
- **VIDEO** – Minds of Medicine TV: Sports Head Injury -- <http://www.henryfordhealth.org/body.cfm?id=38437> . The link to this program can be found under Related Videos. (henryfordhealth.org)

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