

New rule that limits tackling during football practices knocks down concussions

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New research shows that limiting the amount of full-contact tackling during high school football practices can have a big impact on reducing the number of concussions among players.

A University of Wisconsin-Madison study to be presented at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference & Exhibition in Washington, DC, examined sports-related concussion rates among Wisconsin [high school football players](#) after the state's interscholastic athletic association mandated new limits on the amount and duration of full-contact activities during team practices. The rule, which first went into effect for the 2014 season, prohibits full contact during the first week of practice, limits full contact to 75 minutes per week during week 2, and caps it at 60 minutes thereafter. Full contact is defined as drills or game situations when full tackles are made at a competitive pace and players are taken to the ground.

Findings show that the rate of sports-related concussions sustained during high school football practice was more than twice as high in the two seasons prior to the rule change as compared to the 2014 season, said University of Wisconsin-Madison senior scientist Timothy A. McGuine, PhD, ATC.

"This study confirms what athletic trainers who work with high school football programs have long believed regarding the association of full contact drills or practices and the likelihood a player will sustain a [concussion](#)," Dr. McGuine said. "This is probably also true for other football injuries such as sprains, fractures and dislocations."

The study used data from the Wisconsin Interscholastic Sports Injury Research Network, which has recruited and enrolled more than 16,000 adolescent athletes from 103 high schools and sport venues across Wisconsin to serve as subjects for cross sectional, cohort and

The study's findings suggest that limiting full-contact high school football practices may be a no-brainer, Dr. McGuine said. "Educating [high school coaches](#) to limit the amount of full contact would be an effective and economical way to help protect students from head injuries," he said.

More information: McGuine will present the abstract, "Effect of New Rule Limiting Full Contact Practice on Incidence of Sport Related Concussion in High School Football Players," at 2:50 pm on Saturday, Oct. 24 in room 143B at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, DC. To view the abstract, [aap.confex.com/aap/2015/webpro ... nary/Paper31701.html](http://aap.confex.com/aap/2015/webprogram/Paper31701.html)

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