

## NEWS

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### **Statement from the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment *On Leather Football Helmet Study***

"The National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) believes scientific research is very important in helping to understand how best to protect athletes on the field of play. For this reason NOCSAE has invested more than \$5 million since 1994 toward understanding sport-related concussions. NOCSAE, however, has significant concern regarding a recent paper that concludes 'vintage "leatherhead" football helmets [are] often as protective as modern helmets in common, game-like hits.' A study that claims leather helmets are as protective as current helmets has the real potential to mislead the public as to what they can reasonably expect from helmet use.

"Among the many concerns NOCSAE has regarding this research, the study claims to test impact of 'common, game-like hits,' but the study only looked at impact energies far below any that are associated with concussion risk. A wider spectrum of energies would be necessary to truly understand the difference in protection between leather helmets and those used today.

"Additionally, by hitting the leather helmet with a modern helmet fully capable of absorbing most of the very low impact energy, it is impossible to tell how much – if any – protection can be attributed to the leather helmet, and how much was actually provided by the striking helmet. The absence of specific data in the paper to support the conclusions prevents other scientists from reviewing the results. These and other major scientific flaws in the paper raise serious questions as to the conclusions drawn by the authors.

"For nearly four decades NOCSAE has been working to protect athletes from concussions and other injuries. Through our independent process, physicians, academic researchers, coaches, trainers and manufacturers come together to establish standards based on accepted science and reliable data. As a leading nongovernmental source for research funding in all sports medicine and science related to concussion, we support research by the foremost experts in sports medicine and science to develop and advance athlete safety.

"Coaches, athletes and parents of athletes need to get all the facts on football helmets and concussion prevention, and understand that no football helmet prevents all concussions. While helmets play an incredibly important role in protecting athletes, they are not the only solution to better protection against concussion. Prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management of decisions about when athletes should return to play are equally important."

*For the most reliable information regarding helmets and concussion and injury protection and prevention, NOCSAE encourages athletes and parents to carefully review:*

- *Hang tags that come with all new football helmets that address the helmet's abilities and limitations*
- *Informational booklets developed by manufacturers that contain critical information about the helmet's abilities and limitations*
- *Warning information that is prominently affixed to the exterior of every helmet*
- *Free, downloadable resources created by the Centers for Disease Control regarding concussion recognition, response and prevention. Those resources can be found at [www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/)*

*For more information, please visit [www.nocsa.org](http://www.nocsa.org).*

#### *About NOCSAE*

*NOCSAE, the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment, is an independent and nonprofit standard-setting body with the sole mission to enhance athletic safety through scientific research and the creation of performance standards for protective equipment. Formed in 1969, NOCSAE is a leading force in the effort to improve athletic equipment and, as a result, reduce injuries. NOCSAE efforts include the development of performance and test standards for football helmets and facemasks, baseball and softball batters and catchers helmets, baseballs and softballs, ice hockey helmets, soccer shin guards, lacrosse helmets and facemasks and polo helmets. NOCSAE is comprised of representatives from a number of groups which have an interest in athletic equipment – including manufacturers, reconditioners, athletic trainers, coaches, equipment managers, sports medicine and consumer organizations. These diverse interests have joined forces in an attempt to arrive at a common goal of reducing sports-related injuries. NOCSAE is a nonprofit, charitable organization supported by individuals and organizations with an interest in athletics.*