**FOOTBALL CAUTIONARY STATEMENT**

**Like other contact sports, football produces a higher incidences of injuries than other sports. While many are minor, some injuries can be serious and evening life-threatening. Protective be emphasized on and off the field. This information is intended to inform players of the proper techniques to practice for maximum safety in games and practices.**

### PRE-SEASON PREPARATION:

Because football is a contact sport, athletes must condition themselves properly for the season. This includes both strength training as well as aerobic training. It is also important that athletes continue to maintain strength by training during their season. In-season conditioning will also help prevent injuries**.**

### TACKLING, BLOCKING AND RUNNING WITH THE BALL:

By rule, the helmet is not to be used as a “ram.” Initial contact is not to be made with the helmet. It is NOT possible to play the game safely or correctly if the helmet is intentionally used to block or tackle an opponent. Therefore, proper technique is most important to the prevention of injuries.

Tackling and blocking techniques are basically the same. Contact is to be made above the waist, **but not** initially with the helmet. The player should always be in a position of balance, knees bent, back straight, body slightly bent forward, head up, assume a striking position as near to the opponent as possible with the main contact being made with the shoulder when tackling and the hands or shoulder when blocking

Striking an opponent with the helmet could result in a range of injuries. These include shoulder injury such as a separation, pinched nerve in the neck area or disabling injuries and death. The reason for following the safety rules in making contact with the upper body is that *improper body alignment* can put the spinal column in a vulnerable position for injury.

If the head is bent downward, the cervical (neck) vertebrae are vulnerable. With the head in this position, contact on the TOP OF THE HELMET could result in a dislocation, nerve damage, paralysis or death. If the back is not straight, the thoracic (mid-back) and lumbar vertebrae are also vulnerable to serious injury if contact is again made to the TOP OF THE HELMET. Our team’s daily workout includes isometric exercises to enhance development of strength in the upper back and neck muscles. This is one of the best methods of preventing head or neck injury and enables an individual to hold the head up even after getting tired during **a** workout or contest.

#### BASIC CONTACT POSITION AND FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUES

If the knees are not bent, the chance of knee injury is greatly increased. Fundamentally a player should be in the proper hitting position at all times during live ball play and this point will be repeated continually during practice.The danger inherent in an unprotected leg position include strained muscles, ankle injuries,, knee strains and serious knee injuries requiring surgery. The rules have made blocking below the waist (outside a three-yard by four-yard area next to the football) illegal. A runner with the ball, however, may be tackled around the legs.

The length of cleats has been restricted to no more than ½ inch to further help in preventing knee injuries.

In tackling, the rules prohibit initial contact with the helmet or grabbing the face mask or edge of the opponent’s helmet. These restrictions were implemented because of serious injuries resulting neck torsion. Initial helmet contact could result in a bruise, dislocation, broken bone, head injury, internal injury such as kidneys, spleen, bladder, etc. Grabbing the face mask or helmet edge could result in a neck injury which could range from a muscle strain to a dislocation, nerve injury, or spinal column damage causing paralysis or death.

Illegal and dangerous play by participating athletes will not betolerated and all players are repeatedly reminded of the dangers of these acts.

### FITTING AND USE OF THE EQUIPMENT:

Shoulder pads, helmets, hip pads, pants including thigh pads and knee pads should be properly fitted and worn. Wear all protective pads, braces and supportive undergarments to all practices and competitions. Shoulder pads which are too small will leave the shoulder joint vulnerable to bruises or separations and 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 “NOCSAE” branded; the chinstraps must be fastened, and the cheek pads must be of the proper thickness. On contact, a helmet that is too tight 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, and a blow to the back of the neck could cause a neck injury, possibly quite serioussuch as paralysis or even death.

### PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE OR CONTEST:

Wear all protective and supportive equipment including mouth guards to every practice or contest unless otherwise indicated by the daily practice plan**.**

1. Be sure that all stabilizing straps and laces are properly worn and tightened, and all fasteners secured so equipment is properly positioned.
2. Wear outer and under garments that are appropriate for humidity and temperature.
3. Players should ingest the equivalent of 4-6 glasses of water each day.
4. Players with visual impairment(s) must wear corrective, shatterproof glasses or contact lenses if the impairment affects judgment or perception.
5. Players needing protective tape, padding, or bracing should arrive early to receive necessary treatment.
6. Remove all jewelry and metal hair fasteners.
7. Players with seizure, neuromuscular, renal, cardiac, insulin/diabetic, or chronic

skeletal problems, disorders or diseases, must present physician’s approval to the coach prior to participation in any practice session.

### IN THE LOCKER ROOM:

1. Be alert to slippery floors.
2. Be alert to changes in floor texture and to elevated thresholds between shower and locker rooms.
3. Keep floors free of litter. Place all personal belongings in assigned lockers.
4. Close and lock locker doors when away from your assigned locker.
5. Keep soap and shampoo in the shower room.
6. No horseplay, rough-housing, hazing or initiations.
7. Do not wear football shoes in the building or locker room at any time.

**MOVEMENT TO THE PRACTICE/CONTEST SITE OR TRAVEL TO CONTEST/PRACTICE SITE:**

1. Be alert to:
2. Goal posts.
3. Blocking sleds.
4. Kicking/Kick return drills.
5. Passer/Receiver drills.
6. Agility sprinting, or other fast action drills.
7. No horseplay, rough-housing, hazing or initiations.

### CAUTIONS SPECIFIC TO FOOTBALL:

1. **The Head and Helmet**
2. Tackle or block or break tackles with the shoulder pad or hands - **NEVER USE THE HELMET TO STRIKE THE OPPONENT.**
3. Keep the chin and eyes up when blocking, tackling, or running with the ball.
4. Lowering the head/helmet jeopardizes the neck and spinal cord.
5. **Blocking and Defensive Contact**
6. The forearm striking surface should be accelerated as a unit with the shoulder

and extension of the trunk. DO NOT “wind up)” to accelerate the forearm separately.

1. Block from the front or the side and above the waist.

C. When pursuing an opposing ball carrier, do not “pile on” when the opponent is **down.**

D. Never grab an opponent’s facemask.

1. **General**
2. GET UP! When on the ground you are vulnerable to being stepped on or receiving a leg, shoulder or knee injury.
3. When falling - TUCK - Leave no extremity extended while on the ground..

C. Participate fully in all neck strengthening exercises.

1. **Water**
2. Frequent drink breaks will be scheduled during practices and players should
hydrate themselves frequently before and during practice and games. Athletes should follow the guidelines in the extreme heat & humidity policy.

**5. Weight Room**

1. Maintenance strength training procedures will be utilized. Observe all weight room policies for progressions, spotting, and general safety.

### EMERGENCIES:

**Because of the nature of football, some injuries will occur. All injuries must be called to a coach’s or trainer’s attention. Most will be minor and can be -managed with basic first aid. However, some may need more intense management and may also require squad members to:**

1. Stop all practices, scrimmages, or drills. DO NOT move the victim!
2. Call the coach to manage the situation if not already at the site.
3. Sit or kneel in close proximity. Assist by:
4. Helping with the injured person.
5. Call for additional assistance.
6. Bring aid equipment or supplies to the site.
7. Keep onlookers away.
8. Direct rescue squad to the accident site.

4. Fire or Fire Alarm:

1. Evacuate or remain outside the building.
2. Move and remain 150 feet away from the building.
3. Be prepared to implement the emergency procedures outlined above..

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We certify that we have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the cautions, considerations, and responsibilities required for participation on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_High School Football Team.

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**Athlete Signature Date Parent/Guardian Signature Date**