



TO: Member School Principals, Football Coaches and Athletic Directors
FROM: Tom Dolan, Assistant Director
RE: Special Football Information
DATE: August 2009

- I. Enclosed are the following items for use in your school's football program. This mailing includes many important items so please see that your coach gets this information as soon as it is received. You will note the **Section III** pertains specifically to **Player Safety**. It is **strongly recommended by the VHSL staff and the VHSL attorney that each school have a preseason football meeting and for all other sports for parents, players and others to stress that your program will make every effort to insure the safety of all participants. This is important if litigation results from injuries.**
1. 2009 Rule Book - One copy - NOTE: Coaches should review the comments on the 2009 Rules Revisions, especially those sections pertaining to Equipment Changes, Points of Special Emphasis.
2. 2009 Football Rules Clinic Schedule - http://www.vhsl.org/athletics/football_boys - under Resources
3. 2009 Master Football Schedule – on our web site http://www.vhsl.org/athletics/football_boys - under Resources
4. Football Signal Chart, if available http://www.vhsl.org/athletics/football_boys - under Resources

II. **FOOTBALL HELMET INFORMATION**

(a) Certified Helmets - **All helmets** which have been **certified by NOCSAE now have the NOCSAE seal on the helmet.** Helmets without the seal should not be used.

(b) Companies That Recertify Football Helmets -

NOTE: National Federation Football Rules **do not** mandate recertification (or reconditioning), NOCSAE, however, the NOCSAE does recommend that the user adhere to a program of **periodically** having **used helmets retested** under the NOCSAE recertification program. The type of helmet and the amount of intensity of usage will determine when helmets should be retested.

- III. **PLAYER SAFETY** - For the past several years, the VHSL has recommended a football safety meeting involving parents, players, coaches, athletic administrators, and team physicians and/or trainers be held by each school who sponsors football. In view of recent litigation about "coaches' possible negligence due to failure to warn" parents and players the VHSL staff and the Medical Aspects of Sports Committee join in stating that this type of meeting is a must. Defense attorneys in these litigation cases, have stressed the need for coaches to teach the proper techniques for blocking and tackling and point out possible injuries that could result if "butt blocking" or "face tackling" techniques are used. They also stressed that parents should be advised of the precautions that each school is taking to minimize the risk of serious injury. This meeting should include all aspects of the school's football program with an emphasis on safety and should be held prior to the season or during the conditioning period when teams practice without pads. An outline of possible topics for review is enclosed.

In addition, the VHSL attorney recommends that the following Football Helmet Warning Label be attached to the VHSL Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form before it is completed and signed by the parent and player. This statement can be reproduced by each school. It is not included on the form since the form is use by participants in all sports.

WARNING

Do not use this helmet to butt, ram or spear an opposing player. This is in violation of the football rules and can result in severe head, brain or neck injury, paralysis or death to you and possible injury to your opponent. There is a risk these injuries may also occur as a result of accidental contact without intent to butt, ram or spear. **NO HELMET CAN PREVENT ALL SUCH INJURIES.**

1. Additional Football Safety - http://www.vhsl.org/athletics/football_boys - under Resources
2. PreSeason Football Safety Meeting Outline - http://www.vhsl.org/athletics/football_boys - under Resources
3. Cast Rule - http://www.vhsl.org/athletics/football_boys - under Resources

Click here> http://www.vhsl.org/sports_medicine to access the information below:

1. Heat Guidelines
2. Helmet Inspection
3. Athletic Emergency Procedures
4. Attention Football Players - Safety Poster - if available
5. Medical/Legal Considerations
6. Reducing Brain and Spinal Injuries
7. The Unconscious Athlete
8. Coaches Checklist

TD/cs