

CEDAR CREEK SCHOOL FOOTBALL CAUTIONARY STATEMENT

Football is a contact sport and injuries will occur. The coaches working in our program are well qualified, professional people. Fundamentals related to playing football will continually and repeatedly be emphasized on and off the field. The information contained within this list of rules and procedures is to inform the young men in our football program of proper techniques to practice for maximum safety in the contact phase of the game.

PRE-SEASON PREPARATION:

Because football is a contact sport, athletes must condition to prepare themselves for the season. This includes both strength training as well as aerobic training. It is also important that athletes continue to strength train during the season to help prevent injuries.

TACKLING AND BLOCKING:

By rule, **the helmet is not to be used as a "ram"**. It is a piece of protective equipment, not a weapon. While it is not possible to play the game safely or correctly without making contact with the helmet when blocking or tackling an opponent, **initial contact is never made with the top of the helmet**. Therefore, technique is most important to prevention of injuries.

The dangers of using improper techniques range from minor injuries to disabling injuries, even death. Blocking and tackling without putting the helmet as close to the body as possible could result in shoulder injuries, such as separation, or a pinched nerve in the neck area. 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 and 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 (lower - back) vertebrae are also vulnerable to serious injury if contact is made to the **top of the helmet**.

BASIC HITTING POSITION AND FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUES:

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. Tackling and blocking techniques are basically the same. Contact is to be made above the waist, but not initially with the top of the helmet. The player should always be in a position of balance; knees bent, back straight, body slightly forward, with head up. The helmet should be as close to the body as possible with the main impact being absorbed by the shoulder pads.

Leg injuries are probably the most common football injuries. Injuries range from large bruises, strained muscles, ankle injuries, to knee injuries, some serious enough to require surgery. The chance of knee injury is greatly decreased if the knees are bent. The rules have made blocking below the waist illegal (outside a two-yard by four-yard area next to the football). A runner with the ball may be tackled around the legs.

In tackling, the rules prohibit initial contact with the top of the helmet (spearing) or grabbing the face mask or edge of the helmet. Spearing can result in bruises, dislocations, broken bones, head injuries, or internal injuries such as kidney, spleen, bladder, etc. Grabbing the face mask can cause muscle strains, dislocations, nerve injury, or spinal column damage causing paralysis or death.

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

PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE OR CONTEST:

1. Wear all protective and supportive equipment including mouth guards to every practice or contest unless otherwise indicated by the daily practice plan.
2. Be sure that all stabilizing straps and laces are properly worn and tightened and all fasteners secured.
3. Wear outer and under garments that are appropriate for humidity and temperature.
4. Players should replace fluids lost in games and practices by drinking at least 6-8 glasses of water or electrolyte solution daily, even more if extremely hot and humid.
5. Players with visual impairments must wear corrective, shatterproof glasses or contact lenses.
6. Players needing protective tape, padding, or bracing should arrive early to receive necessary treatment.
7. Remove all jewelry.
8. Players with seizure, neuromuscular, renal, cardiac, insulin/diabetic, chronic skeletal problems, disorders or diseases, **must** present physician's approval to the head 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 room.
3. Keep floors free of litter. Place all personal belongings in assigned lockers.
4. Keep soap and shampoo in the shower room.
5. No horseplay, rough-housing, hazing, or initiations.
6. Do not wear football shoes in the building or locker room. **Exception - half time of games.**

CAUTIONS SPECIFIC TO FOOTBALL:

A. The Head and the Helmet

1. Tackle, block, break tackles with head up, main impact to should pad. **NEVER USE THE TOP OF THE HELMET TO STRIKE AN OPPONENT.**
2. Keep the chin and eyes up when blocking, tackling, or running with the ball.
3. Lowering the head/helmet jeopardizes the neck and spinal cord.

B. Blocking and Defensive Contact

1. The forearm striking surface should be accelerated as a unit with the shoulder and extension of trunk. Do not "wind up" to accelerate the forearm separately.
2. Block from the front or the side and above the waist.
3. When pursuing an opposing ball carrier, **do not pile on** when the opponent is down.
4. **Never grab an opponent's face mask.**

C. General

1. **Get Up!** When on the ground, you are vulnerable to being stepped on or receiving a leg, shoulder, or knee injury.
2. When falling, **Tuck.** Leave no extremity extended while on the ground. **Never try to absorb the fall with your arm.** The result will likely be a sprained or broken wrist or arm.

D. Water

1. Frequent drink breaks will be scheduled during practices. Players hydrate themselves frequently before and during practices and games.

E. Weight Room

1. Strength training is an important part of Cougar Football. Strength training goes on during the season, during the post season, and in the summer. All football players should participate in strength training. Not only does it make us stronger and better athletes, but it is also useful in protecting from injuries.
2. Absolutely no horseplay or rough-housing in the weight room.
3. **Never lift weights alone.** There must always be a coach supervising weight lifting drills.

F. 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. **Parents will always be notified in case of serious injury.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We certify that we have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the cautions, considerations, and responsibilities required for participation on the Cedar Creek Football Team.

_____/_____
Athlete's Signature Date

_____/_____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date