



Oregon School Activities Association
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NEWS RELEASE

OREGON HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACHES GET AHEAD OF THE GAME

OSAA is the nation's first high school association to require the Heads Up Football program and member schools respond in an effort to advance player safety

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Sept. 21, 2016) – Oregon high school football coaches are leading a national effort to increase player safety in the sport of football.

“We need to make sure we are doing absolutely everything we can to make the game as safe as possible,” OSAA Executive Director Peter Weber said. “Implementation of the Heads Up certification program packaged with past policy changes that limit full contact during the practice week, mandate return to play protocols, and emphasis on enforcement of NFHS Football rules provide us a solid foundation directly addressing risk minimization efforts.”

Since the Oregon School Activities Association first announced it was requiring USA Football’s Heads Up Football Program in February, each of the 241 member schools which play the sport have had a member of its staff certified as a Player Safety Coach.

Supported by the American College of Sports Medicine, the National Athletic Trainers’ Association and the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, the Heads Up Football program teaches tackling and blocking techniques designed to reduce helmet contact while incorporating concussion recognition and response, sudden cardiac arrest protocols, hydration and heat preparedness and instruction on proper helmet and shoulder pad fitting.

Player Safety Coaches are trained to guide, direct and monitor the program’s implementation as well as lead in-person training for fellow coaches, parents and student-athletes.

Every high school football head or assistant coach in Oregon, paid or volunteer, must complete the Heads Up Football certification.

Terry Summerfield, a USA Football master trainer and head football coach at Barlow High School and several other master trainers from surrounding states conducted 17 clinics statewide in the past seven months.

“If you love football and you love working with kids and want to do the right thing, USA Football is going to give you the tools that put an emphasis on players and safety,” Summerfield said.

More than 1,100 high schools and nearly 70 percent of U.S. youth football leagues registered for Heads Up Football in 2015.



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“Heads Up Football is the most comprehensive player safety program available today,” said Brad Garrett, OSAA Assistant Executive Director who directs football for the association. “It reinforces best practices regarding all-player fundamentals essential to building a continuum of football throughout the grade levels.”

The primary goal of the OSAA is to ensure the health and safety of its student-athletes. Initiated by efforts of its sports medicine advisory committee, in 2008 the OSAA became the first state high school activities association to prohibit same day return to play for athletes with a suspected concussion and helped shape the suggested guidelines for management of concussion in sport that is included in every NFHS rule book.

“Heads Up Football is the logical next step forward as sports medicine experts continue to work with coaches to implement innovative ways to minimize the risk of football injuries,” said Dr. Michael Koester, chair of the OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. “The Oregon School Activities Association's endorsement of the program – and requiring our football-playing schools to adopt Heads Up Football – is an important opportunity for high school coaches statewide to set an example for youth leagues in their communities. As a team physician and the parent of a high school football player, I stand behind Heads Up Football as a leading intervention for safer play.”

“Oregon high school football coaches are making an investment in ensuring the future of the game,” Garrett said. “As a father of a son playing football in Oregon, I am extremely thankful and proud to be associated with athletic administrators and coaches who understand the importance of risk minimization efforts like USA Football’s Heads Up certification program.”

A video including highlights of Terry Summerfield’s clinics as well as additional comments from Summerfield, Peter Weber and Brad Garrett, may be viewed at www.osaa.org.

Follow OSAA’s Heads Up Football program effort on Twitter: @OSAAsports, #aheadofthegame.

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About the OSAA: The Oregon School Activities Association (www.osaa.org) is a private nonprofit, board governed association comprised of 290 member high schools. The OSAA, a member of the National Federation of State High School Associations, annually sponsors 116 state championships in 19 sports and activities. Follow the OSAA at www.facebook.com/osaasports, on Twitter at @OSAAsports and Instagram @OSAAsports.

About USA Football: Indianapolis-based USA Football (www.usafootball.com) is the sport’s national governing body, leading the game’s development for youth, high school and other amateur players. A member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, USA Football partners with leaders in medicine, child advocacy and sport to establish standards rooted in the best available science. USA Football advances coaching education and player skill development for safer play and positive experiences through football. Follow USA Football at www.facebook.com/usafootball or on Twitter @USAFootball.