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***** MEDIA ADVISORY *****

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**OREGON SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION TO ADVANCE
FOOTBALL STUDENT-ATHLETE SAFETY THROUGH
USA FOOTBALL'S HEADS UP FOOTBALL® PROGRAM**

***OSAA becomes first state high school activities association to require
USA Football's High School Heads Up Football program to advance player safety in 2016***

The Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) has become the first state high school activities association in the United States to require coach enrollment into USA Football's Heads Up Football® program for the benefit of its student-athletes, effective in 2016.

The OSAA recommends its 249 football-playing high schools enroll in High School Heads Up Football in 2015. Oregon high schools will be required to do so in 2016.

USA Football, the sport's national governing body, trains more high school and youth football coaches combined than any organization in the country.

Nearly 1,000 high schools spanning 44 states signed up for USA Football's Heads Up Football program in 2014.

High School Heads Up Football has earned the endorsement of leaders in medicine, child advocacy and sport. In addition to the USA Football program, Oregon high schools will continue to follow existing OSAA protocols to advance student-athlete health.

Created and administered by independent non-profit USA Football, High School Heads Up Football establishes important standards rooted in the best available science for safer play.

Heads Up Football is a comprehensive approach to teach and play the No. 1 participatory sport of U.S. high school boys. Supported by the American College of Sports Medicine, the National Athletic Trainers' Association and the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, the program teaches tackling and blocking techniques designed to reduce helmet contact while addressing all-sport-relevant topics with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concussion recognition and response; sudden cardiac arrest protocols; hydration and heat preparedness; and instruction on proper helmet and shoulder pad fitting.

Recommended for 2015 and required in 2016, Oregon high schools will designate one Player Safety Coach (PSC) from their football coaching staffs. Each PSC will be trained by USA Football to guide, direct and monitor the program's implementation as well as lead in-person training for fellow coaches, parents and players. PSCs have access to USA Football clinics statewide this summer to learn Heads Up Football protocols and techniques.

Coaches also will complete an online Heads Up Football High School training course developed by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and USA Football. The course is made available to all U.S. high school football coaches at www.NFHSLearn.com.

According to the NFHS, more than 1.12 million boys played high school football in 2013-14, outnumbering the combined participation figure for the second- and third-most popular boys sports combined.

"In our ongoing effort to minimize risks in the sport, we are pleased to partner with USA Football and implement Heads Up Football," said OSAA Executive Director Tom Welter. "This program will ensure that all coaches, players and parents will receive consistent technique training and make the game as safe as possible."

Dr. Michael Koester, chairperson of the OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, says the Heads Up Football requirement in Oregon is logical considering in 2008 OSAA became the first state high school activities association to prohibit same day return to play for athletes with a suspected concussion.

"The committee sees this as a natural next step as we continue to look at innovative ways to minimize the risk of all football injuries, but particularly concussions," Dr. Koester said. "This is an opportunity for high school coaches to set a standard for the youth leagues in their communities across the state. Ideally, we'll have youth coaches getting certified as well, allowing for continuity of tackling techniques and safety protocols through an athlete's entire playing experience."

"As a team physician and the parent of a high school football player, I'm excited about Heads Up Football."

USA Football's Heads Up Football program includes the following components:

Coaching education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches successfully complete online training through the NFHS-USA Football High School Heads Up Football course at NFHSLearn.com, covering football fundamentals and all-sport-relevant topics of concussion recognition and response, sudden cardiac arrest protocols and hydration and heat preparedness.
Concussion recognition and response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches gain in-person instruction and are assessed on CDC concussion recognition and response. Coaches, parents and players are taught concussion-related protocols at the start of the season.
Equipment fitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches, parents and players are taught proper helmet and shoulder pad fitting.
Heads Up Blocking and Tackling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Series of fundamental drills reinforce tackling and blocking mechanics, teaching players how to perform these basic football skills with a focus on reducing helmet contact.
Sudden cardiac arrest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruction on how to have plans and procedures in place to quickly react in the case of cardiac events, the No. 1 cause of death among young athletes during exercise.
Heat and hydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches, parents and players learn heat and hydration safety measures provided by the Korey Stringer Institute at the University of Connecticut.
Player Safety Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointed by each high school, this individual ensures that High School Heads Up Football principles and protocols are properly taught and applied within a program.

"This is a watershed moment for high school football," USA Football CEO and Executive Director Scott Hallenbeck said. "The OSAA's commitment to its football student-athletes and coaches establishes a new standard on the state level, employing the best available science. Coaches are teachers. Supporting them with education is a powerful catalyst to change for the better how players are taught and safety is addressed."

Among the leaders across medicine and sport who support USA Football's Heads Up Football program include:

- Amateur Athletic Union
- American College of Sports Medicine
- American Football Coaches Association
- American Medical Society for Sports Med.
- Arizona Interscholastic Association
- Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC)
- Big 12 Conference
- Big Ten Conference
- Boys and Girls Clubs of America
- Conference USA
- ESPN
- Korey Stringer Institute at the U. of Conn.
- Md. Public Secondary Schools Ath. Assoc.
- Maxwell Football Club
- Michigan H.S. Football Coaches Assoc.
- Minnesota Football Coaches Assoc.
- National Association of Sports Officials
- National Athletic Trainers Association
- NATA Research & Ed. Foundation
- National Fed. of State High School Assoc.
- National Football League
- NFL Alumni Association
- Nat'l Interscholastic Athletic Admin. Assoc.
- National Parent Teacher Assoc. (PTA)
- National Police Athletic League
- North Carolina Coaches Association
- Northern Va. Football Coaches Assoc.
- Pac-12 Conference
- Pop Warner Little Scholars
- Pro Football Athletic Trainers Society
- Southeastern Conference (SEC)
- Sport Safety International
- Sports & Fitness Industry Association

- Indiana Football Coaches Association
- NFL Head, Neck & Spine Committee
- United Youth Football League

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 [@OSAASports](https://twitter.com/OSAASports) and Instagram [@OSAASports](https://www.instagram.com/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. The independent nonprofit partners with leaders in medicine, child advocacy and sport to establish important standards rooted in education. USA Football advances coaching education and player skill development for safer play and positive experiences through athletics. Follow USA Football at www.facebook.com/usafootball or on Twitter [@USAFootball](https://twitter.com/USAFootball).