

National Federation of State High School Associations’ “Concussion in Sports” Course Free to Coaches, Parents, Players

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS (August 25, 2010) — With the high school football season underway, coaches, parents, players and officials are encouraged to complete the *Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know* online course offered free of charge by the Indianapolis-based National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). To date, more than 47,000 persons have registered and completed the NFHS Coach Education course available at www.nfhslearn.com.

Concussion in Sports provides a guide to understanding, recognizing and properly managing concussions in high school sports. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has endorsed the course and provided many useful resources.

“Although coaches, parents and players involved with football will certainly benefit from *Concussion in Sports*, research shows that concussions occur in other sports as well,” said Bob Gardner, NFHS executive director. “With more than 7½ million young people involved in high school sports, minimizing the risk of injury is extremely important. The course is a ‘must do’ for anyone associated with high school sports.”

The 20-minute online course is designed to highlight the importance of recognizing and responding to sports-related concussions, which pose a particularly high risk for adolescents. The course is hosted by Michael Koester, M.D., chair of the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and director of the Sports Concussion Program at the Slocum Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine in Eugene, Oregon. Individuals have access to the course and printable resources, including a parent’s guide to concussion in sports, a coach’s guide, an athlete fact sheet and materials for schools to implement a protocol for concussion treatment.

According to the 2009-10 High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study, more than 140,000 high school athletes suffer a concussion each year. The study, conducted by Dawn Comstock, Ph.D., director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, also indicated that the incidence rate for concussion is highest among football players. The next two highest rates among boys sports are ice hockey and lacrosse. In girls sports, the incidence rate is highest in soccer, gymnastics and lacrosse.

In addition to education courses, the NFHS has been the leader in establishing playing rules to deal with concussions. In 2008, the SMAC advocated that a concussed athlete must be removed from play and not allowed to return to play on the same day. In 2009, the position was adopted by a leading group of sports concussion experts and the National Football League (NFL).

For 2010-11, the NFHS implemented new guidelines for the management of a student exhibiting signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion. Based on the SMAC, these guidelines have been included in all NFHS rules books for the 2010-11 season. The language

reads: “Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, such as loss of consciousness, headaches, dizziness, confusion or balance problems, shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.”

The NFHS Coach Education Program began in 2007 with two core courses – *Fundamentals of Coaching* and *First Aid for Coaches*. The core courses provide coaches with content from all eight domains contained in the National Standards for Sport Coaches (NASPE 2006). These two courses form the foundation from which all elective courses and sport-specific courses are developed specifically for interscholastic coaches. To date, more than 140,000 coaches have completed *Fundamentals of Coaching*. Forty-five of the 51 NFHS member associations have adopted or recommended the course. All 14 of the NFHS coach education courses, including sport-specific courses for football, soccer, softball, spirit, volleyball and wrestling, are available at www.nfhslearn.com.

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