



CONFRONTING THE JARRING TRUTH

Reality of concussions come to light

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It's the middle of the fourth quarter. Everyone knows it won't take too much to win this last Friday night football game if it all just plays out right. "Set, hut!" yells the quarterback. The ball is on the move now. From one player to the next, the ball moves and so do they. It lands in the hands of a running back when all of a sudden there's a loud crash, and the whistle blows. The running back is now laying on the ground, and he looks up at the referees and other players surrounding him. Everything is in a daze for a little while, and then he blacks out. The next day in school, the same running back keeps complaining about having pressure in his head. "You might have a concussion," his science teacher tells him. "Such a hard hit like the one you took last night can cause that type of trauma."

While it is fun to watch and play different sports where quite a bit of physical contact can happen, it does come with its own specific injuries. One of the most common of these injuries is a concussion, which is sliding of the brain back and forth between the inner walls of the skull caused by direct or indirect blows. Effects include on-field loss of consciousness, headaches, nausea, and slurred speech..

"As an athletic trainer, one of the most important skills is taking care of and protecting an adolescent's brain to allow them to live a full life," senior Megan Conerly said. "Concussions are a scary and dangerous injury but can be back to normal with the correct treatment."

While there are many ways to protect the body against concussions, it's hard to completely avoid them. According to recent studies, 33% of high school athletes who have one concussion during the year will report two or more of them in the same year, and with football season having started up, at least 47% of reported concussions will happen during this season.

"The average person would say football has more concussions, but I think soccer has more concussions than any other sport," football coach Evan Beaton said.

Almost any and every sport shows statistics and records of concussions. It is important however to keep in mind ways that these can be avoided, and prevented while still performing as best as possible.

"I would say that it is inevitable that an athlete gets a concussion," Beaton said. "It's just kind of the risk you take."

