

Topics in marketing



Topics in Marketing March 23, 2013 Concussions in Football Injuries in sports are bound to happen no matter what sport you are playing and you never know when an injury will occur. They just come with the territory and they can range from a cut to an injury that could end an athlete's career or even worse lead to a death. A big problem in sports nowadays is that there are too many concussions in pro sports all the way down to young kids who are just starting to play a sport. Football in particular has received a lot of backlash about the safety of the sport because there tends to be more concussions in this sport than in any of the other major sports. With all this talk about concussions in football, it may become very hard to market the sport because of all the safety problems and this could lead to less participation. A concussion is when there is a blow to the head or body that causes a type of traumatic brain injury. It causes stretching, damaging the cells, and chemical changes to the brain. Basically, it is when your brain moves in the skull and hits the side of your skull. There are many different symptoms that the athlete can experience, but there are also symptoms that coaches and other players can observe if they believe someone may have a concussion.

Symptoms that players experience include headaches, nausea or vomiting, dizziness or sensitivity to light and noise, and memory problems just to name a few. Symptoms that coaches can observe include glassy eyes, noticing the player is forgetting plays, answers slowly, and can't recall what happened before or after the play. Dangers of receiving one or more concussions can include brain swelling or permanent brain damage and in some cases they can be fatal. There are also concussion danger signs, which include one pupil larger than the other, a headache that gets worse, convulsions or seizures, loss of consciousness and can't be woken up, and can't recognize people or

places. There is no way to fully prevent concussions no matter what equipment you are wearing or how good you are. The best way to lower concussions is to teach the younger kids how to properly hit and not to use their head when tackling. Always emphasize that safety comes first. During the 2012-2013 NFL season, there were more than 160 players that had head injuries, but at the same time there were breakthroughs in brain research, a wrongful death lawsuit, and the President of the United States talked about head injuries that come along with playing football. The biggest play that would lead to concussions would be kickoffs, so this year they moved it up five yards for more touchbacks. By doing this, there was a 43 percent drop in head injuries during kickoffs. After doing this, the NFL donated \$30 million to the National Institute of Health for research on head injuries. This is when all the head injuries started happening because they season was fully underway now. A Jacksonville Jaguars player suffered his second concussion on 9/30 and his second in as many weeks and his third total of the season. By receiving more and more concussions, this player is putting himself in danger of hurting himself for good. Boston University then did a study on former football players and found that there were 28 cases of CTE in players that have passed away, including 15 who played in the NFL. The most recent being Junior Seau who took many blows to the head over his career and they found that it was present in him when he committed suicide. With all these head injuries happening, it's hard to hear the 4 in 5 NFL players don't trust their team's medical staff. On the upside, for the 2012 season, more concussions were being reported, which the NFL believes means teams are becoming more serious about head injuries. From practices, games, and preseason there were 154 concussions reported through week eight of the

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season. That was a 21 percent increase from the 127 reported in the same span for the 2009 season and a 34 percent increase from the 2008 season. It seems that every week, key players on teams are missing time on the field because they are having head injuries from their practices and games. The neck and spine committee of the NFL are continuing to meet to improve player safety and to make strides and lowering the number of concussions in the NFL. They are hoping that with the information they gain, players will now think twice about reporting head injuries and also look out for teammates that may have sustained a head injury and report it. They hope that they will stop playing through these injuries and start focusing on their own health. In November 2009, 30 out of 160 players surveyed said that they hid their symptoms or even said they weren't as bad as they really were. New York Jets player Brodney Pool stated, " That's one good thing (Commissioner) Roger Goodell and the NFL have been doing: The message is that if there's something wrong with a guy, especially a head injury, you don't want to rush a guy back or make a little mistake that could mess him up, possibly for life. " While players don't trust their medical staff, the NFL is taking the right steps to increase player safety after a big hit. Next season every team will now study concussions using iPads during the games. This will help determine if a player suffered a concussion during the game. With this new app, trainers will now be able to do side by side tests of baseline and post injury tests to help determine when a player should be taken out of a game in real time. Along with this, each team will now have an independent neurological consultant on the sideline to help assist the trainers and physicians. These tests are very quick and only take between 6 and 8 minutes and will include the player's concussion past and a 24-

symptom checklist. Players will be given memory tests and will be asked the same question about 5 minutes later to see if they remember. The NFL wants the consultants to have full say in whether a player can re-enter the game because that's what they are strictly there for, but they believe that this may not be the case. These tests still aren't perfect, but the NFL is going in the right direction to keep players safe. This past off-season, the NFL has implemented new rules to help keep the players safe and to lower the concussion problem. One new rule is that players are now not allowed to deliver hard hits to opposing players with the crown of their helmet. New York Giants head coach Tom Coughlin said, " It does reinforce the importance of getting out in front of this before something tragic happens. " Even with the new rule, helmet companies are trying new technology to help stop concussions. They now test helmets by putting them on plastic dummies and hitting them with a machine to test how safe the helmets actually are when there is a blow to it. Three sensors in the helmet test how many G forces the helmet takes when the machinery hits it. The tests cover 12 different helmet locations on 5 different velocities on the impact of the helmet. In the last three years, there have been over 200 concussions in each season and they are trying to greatly reduce this number. The study has already collected over 350, 000 impacts on the helmets that contain the sensors. They have discovered that it isn't always the biggest hit, but where the hit occurs on the body and if there is repetition of the hit. Along with the study, the NFL has teamed up with the military and have taken ideas from them including different pad lining material, stiffness, and thickness to help prevent the brain from rattling in the skull. With the NFL being sued so much now by former players, they are now pushing harder than ever for research

on the brain and equipment. This has jump started scientific studies, rule changes, and investments in research including the \$100 million grant by the NFL Players Association to Harvard Medical School for a ten year study of players health. Even with all the new equipment and tests and safety precautions, parents are being hesitant to let their children play football because of the risks it comes with. Terry Bradshaw, a former NFL quarterback is the latest player to say he wouldn't let his son play football if he had one. He stated, " If I had a son today, and I would say this to all our audience and our viewers out there, I would not let him play football. " He also believes that in the next decade soccer may pass football and that contact sports will slowly decrease. He also spoke about six concussions that completely knocked him out cold and how dangerous that can be. Another former NFL quarterback, Troy Aikman, has also said that he wouldn't stop his son from playing the sport, but he wouldn't encourage him to play. There are also NFL players in the league now they have said they wouldn't want their son to play the sport because of the dangers. This includes Bart Scott, Adrian Peterson, and Ed Reed who are some of the top players in the league. This even caught the attention of the President who said he would not want his son to play football and even Tom Brady's father has said that he would hesitate to let his son, 3-time Super Bowl Champion Tom Brady, play the sport. As of right now, more than 2, 000 former NFL players are suing the NFL claiming that they were never told what the long term affects of concussions were. Concerned parents have even came out and said they wouldn't let their son play or that they want to take them out of the sport and put them into a less physical sport. In a recent study, it is estimated that there are 2, 000 NFL players, 100, 000 college players, 1. 3 million high

school players and 3.5 million players in the youth leagues. Over the past few years, the number of players in youth leagues has slowly decrease because parents are scared for their sons safety. The study also found that in youth leagues, most of the head injuries occur in practice and not in the games. Thirty-five states now have different types of laws that make it so players cannot return to the game until they have medical clearance if they are playing on school properties. As of right now, too many high school students are returning to the field too soon after sustaining a concussion, which could increase the potential for the athlete to receive permanent brain damage. A study conducted from 2005-2008 showed that 41% of players are returning to the field too soon. If a player receives a concussion or they believe the player may have a concussion, the rule states that if the player suffers from one or more of the symptoms for more than 15 minutes, they could be sidelined until they are symptom free for a week. The biggest and probably scariest statistic is that 16% of high school players who have lost consciousness after receiving a concussion have returned to the field the same day. This could become very dangerous and lead to fatalities if this continues to happen. Not enough high schools have certified trainers in concussions and only 42% of schools have certified trainers. By not have certified trainers, the schools are putting the athletes in danger because they won't be told if they have a concussion and one more blow to the head could end their career or life. Concussions can be dangerous because it can slow down blood and oxygen from reaching the brain. This can cause players to become sluggish and not know what is going on in the game and can lead to other injuries or even more concussions. A neurosurgeon and concussion expert believes that someone who has a mild concussion for the first time

should even be out of the game until his or her symptoms are gone for a week. The main problem with high school athletes is that they will hide the fact that they have symptoms because they want to keep playing because they love the sport and believe playing through pain makes them better and tougher. In the end, the players should be thinking of their own health and not about going back in the game. With all that said, the NFL and football in general are going to start having a problem marketing the sport. It's already hard enough to play because equipment and playing fees keeps increasing, but with all these injuries, children are going to stop playing for their own benefit. Parents are beginning to think more and more about letting their kids play certain sports because of all the dangers that come with the territory. They are realizing that it may not be worth having the children potentially get concussions and head injuries along with other injuries that can come from sports. I believe that in the next few years, you will definitely see a drop in participation numbers just for the simple fact that it's too dangerous a sport. Kids are getting bigger, stronger, and faster with all of today's technology and supplements, which will lead to harder and bigger hits. They can still market the sport in a positive way by talking about the new technology and equipment, but at the same time people are going to hear about the injuries in the NFL. With the recent suicides of former NFL players, it is clear that something has to be done to help keep players safe and they are going in the right direction, but they still have a lot of research and development to do. It can also become hard to market the sport when you have former superstars and current superstars saying that they wouldn't let or they wouldn't want their own children to play because they know first hand how dangerous this contact sport is. There have been fatalities in high

school football because athlete's concussions are going unnoticed and I believe that this is the biggest hurdle the football in general has to overcome. It shows that schools need to get better medical staff and they need to notice when a player has a concussion and keep them out of the game. They also have to teach the athletes to know when something is wrong with them and tell them to not try to play through it because they are just putting themselves in harms way for a serious injury. Football and the NFL definitely have problems, but they are definitely going in the right direction to protect players as much as they can. Whether it is teaching how to hit or new and better equipment or taking kids out of the game after a certain amount of hits, the concussions will eventually start to decrease. I do believe the sport is going to keep losing participation and I also believe that another sport like soccer, basketball, or baseball will pass football as the biggest sport in America. Works Cited Football, USA. " Heads Up: Concussion in Football." USA Football. N. p.. Web. 25 Mar 2013. Breslow, Jason. " NFL Concussions: The 2012-13 Season In Review." Frontline. N. p., 1 Feb 2013. Web. 25 Mar 2013. Battista, Judy. " N. F. L. Will Expand Concussion Efforts During Games." The New York Times. N. p., 26 Feb 2013. Web. 25 Mar 2013. McIntyre, Brian. " Terry Bradshaw wouldn't let son play football now." NFL. N. p., 14 Jun 2012. Web. 25 Mar 2013. Mihoces, Gary. " Parents weigh risks of youth football amid concussion debate." USA Today. N. p., 23 May 2012. Web. 25 Mar 2013. Shyr, Luna. " NFL Looks to Helmet Technology to Combat Concussions." . N. p., 1 Feb 2013. Web. 25 Mar 2013. Gregory, Sean. " Study: Kids Competing Too Soon After Concussions." Time Magazine. N. p., 21 Jan 2009. Web. 25 Mar 2013. Press, Associated. " Concussions reported in NFL up 21 percent from last season." NFL. N. p., 13 Dec 2012. Web. 25 Mar 2013.

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