

The shoulder pads protect the shoulder. Many players think the bigger the better; in fact, a shoulder pad which is too large will not properly protect the shoulder and may actually increase the likelihood of injury. The pads are a 3 part system which combine to absorb and dissipate shock from a blow. The hard outer shell deflects some of the force away from the body. The inner foam absorbs shock. When the athlete hits an opponent on the top of the pad, the pad squeezes the chest and dissipates further force like bending your knees when landing from a jump.

Foam rubber hip/tailbone/knee/thigh pads are worn by each player to cushion bony prominences. The hip and tailbone pads are held in place by the girdle shell, a pair of shorts with pockets for the pads. The thigh and knee pads are held in pockets in the pants. Some girdle shells have long legs with pockets for the thigh pads. It is important that the pads be held in place properly. If the athlete seems to be borderline between two sizes of pants, he should go with the smaller pair.

Other pads (such as hand, forearm, elbow, rib, etc.) are available through sporting goods stores for those athletes desiring them. If a player has a significant history of certain types of injuries, or suffers an injury during the season, he should contact one of the Athletic Trainers to discuss protection.

Shoes, an important piece of protective equipment, are discussed in the brochure titled "Athletic Injury Prevention at Lake Forest High School."

Please contact the Athletic Trainers should you have any questions about the points discussed. While injuries cannot be totally eliminated, a little planning up front can greatly reduce the chances.

ATHLETIC TRAINING ROOM HOURS

(Subject to change without notice)

Monday through Friday:

Periods 4, 5, 6, & 8
Evaluations, treatments, and rehabilitation programs can be conducted during any of these periods that the athlete has lunch, study hall, or a free period.

After school to approx. 6:30 pm
(Depending on event coverage)
No evaluations are done from 3:00 - 3:45. All injuries must be evaluated prior to first taping.

Evenings, weekends, and school holidays:

Event coverage only

CONTACTING THE ATCs

Athletic Training Room Phone:
(847)582-7397

If the ATCs are not in, leave a message as they do check voicemail often. Each coach has instructions on additional methods of contacting the ATCs.

Football Injury Prevention



at Lake Forest High School

**Important information
for parents of LFHS
athletes.**

**Jeff Dooley, MS, ATC/L
Jennifer Regan, MS, ATC/L
Athletic Trainers**

FOOTBALL INJURY PREVENTION

It is a well known fact that, of all sports at LFHS, football has the highest injury potential. You and your son need to be aware that significant, even catastrophic, injuries can occur in a collision sport like football, including severe head or neck injuries. There is however, a much higher likelihood that your son will suffer death or quadriplegia from an auto accident, or some other kind of accident, than on the football field. This brochure is to inform you of some of the steps the school has taken and that you and your son can take to reduce the chance of injury.

TECHNIQUE

The athlete must learn and practice proper technique and positioning to protect the head and neck. First and foremost, the head should not be used as the primary point of contact with another player. Spearing, using the helmet as a weapon by lowering your head to drive into your opponent (by either an offensive or defensive player) is dangerous and illegal. If the athlete hits with the top of his head, the force can be transmitted down the spine, causing compression fractures or other injuries. If the athlete keeps his head up and hits with his shoulder or chest, his neck is protected and he can see where his opponent is going.

EQUIPMENT

All protective equipment is checked and maintained by our equipment manager. At the end of each season, all helmets and shoulder pads are sent to a reconditioner, who thoroughly checks for any cracks, damaged padding, or other problems. The helmets are recertified (see below). Any equipment which does not meet safety standards is reconditioned or discarded and replaced with new equipment.

The helmet is designed primarily to protect the skull from the hard contact in football. Secondly it will help deflect and absorb some of the shock to decrease the chance of concussion or injury to the brain itself. The helmet does not protect the neck and cannot prevent all head injuries. Please read the warning sticker on your son's helmet.

Also, all helmets have a seal from the National Operating Committee on Safety in Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) molded into the shell; each season they receive an updated seal in the form of a sticker from the reconditioner. Finally, each helmet has a serial number which tells the reconditioner what year it was made. They check this date, and remove helmets from service at the end of 5 years.

It is important that the helmet be properly fit. All of our helmets contain air cells which can be inflated or deflated to customize their fit. The front edge of the helmet should be about $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1" above the eyebrows and the helmet should not shift on the head when the facemask is grasped and moved. While the helmet should not be squeezing the head hard enough to cause headaches, it should be holding the head firmly. The athlete should check the fit of his helmet daily, and frequently check that the screws for his chin strap and facemask are tight.

The mouthguard is a required piece of equipment which not only helps prevent dental injuries, it helps absorb shock from blows to the jaw, potentially reducing the chance of concussion. Most mouthguards also come with dental insurance in case an injury occurs while the athlete is wearing it (save the package the mouthguard came in).

The face mask protects the face. We have a variety of face masks which provide different levels of protection; selection is based on athlete preference, position played, and individual needs.

All face masks provide oral protection with 2 or more bars in front of the mouth. The least protective masks provide oral protection only. These are open in front of the eyes, and commonly worn by quarterbacks, running backs, and receivers who want the unrestricted vision these masks provide. Nasal protection is provided by a vertical bar in the middle. These are commonly worn by linemen, who want protection from opponents' hands, fingers, and elbows. Jaw protection is provided by extending the mask below the level of the chin and are available with and without the nasal bar.

An additional item which some athletes choose to add is a face shield. This is a piece of plastic which straps to the face mask in front of the eyes. These are available clear and tinted. They can be beneficial for an athlete with an eye injury or condition requiring extra protection. Some athletes have reported difficulty seeing if the shield gets scratched, and problems in night games with the tinted shields.

Neck rolls or Cowboy collars are sometimes used to prevent excessive neck motion. If an athlete has a history of recurrent "stingers" these can be helpful. If an athlete wishes one as a preventive measure, they are available through a variety of sporting goods stores. It is important that it not excessively restrict extension of the neck. If the head and neck are locked straight the athlete cannot stop himself from spearing, possibly increasing the risk of injury.