



GUIDANCE FOR MINIMIZING RISK IN FOOTBALL PRACTICE CONTACT DRILLS

National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

NFHS SMAC recommends that member state associations and their member schools eliminate football practice drills that create unnecessary high-speed, head-on player contact or encourage helmet-to-helmet collisions. When these drills are used for instructional purposes, they should be conducted only at walk-through or controlled teaching speeds (no greater than one-half speed) with an emphasis on proper technique, body positioning, and player safety. The intent of this guidance is to reduce closing speeds, eliminate unnecessary head contact, and minimize the risk of injury during football practice.

This guidance addresses eliminating:

1. Any drill that promotes one-on-one tests of strength within an artificially confined area that does not permit the defensive player to angle their approach, shed the blocker, or otherwise avoid unnecessary direct contact;
2. Any Bull Rush drill in which players begin more than four yards apart. If used for instructional purposes, the drill should be conducted only at walk-through or no greater than one-half speed;
3. Any head-on blocking or tackling drill in which players line up more than four yards apart. These drills should not be conducted at full speed and, if used for teaching, should be limited to walk-through or no greater than one-half speed; and
4. Drills such as, but not limited to, Bull in the Ring/King of the Circle, Oklahoma Drill, and Offensive Line/Defensive Line In-Line Run Blocking/Board Drill that create unnecessary head-on collisions or emphasize vertical displacement without an opportunity for the defender to evade the block, should be eliminated from practice or modified to be conducted only at walk-through or no greater than one-half speed.

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