

**Football is Here to Stay**

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I have grown up with football everywhere, watching it, playing it, and always talking about it, but what if it were to disappear soon? In the article, “Football is here to stay” from *The New York Times*, Easterbrooks (2019), goes on to explain several reasons why the football world has a chance to stick around. Easterbrook (2019) shows the other side by stating the statistics on concussions in football today. Easterbrook then goes on to talk about how different schools around the country are changing their practice rules and contact practices. Easterbrook (2019) believes the concussions with NFL professionals correlate right back to their youth football, and he explains how crucial it is to keep youth football safe. Easterbrook (2019) wants the NFL to change linemen's stances to keep their heads safer. Overall, Easterbrook (2019) believes that with these safety rules and maybe adding a few more, football will stay for the long haul. I agree with Easterbrook that people need to start taking the safety in football more seriously. Easterbrook (2019) believes fewer contact practices, better safety for the youth, and different stances will all help keep football around.

Easterbrook (2019) writes, “They think that mounting evidence of brain trauma from concussions will result in football losing its mass appeal. It is also assumed that parents of young athletes will refuse to allow their children to play football at the youth and high school levels” I agree with this statement, football is really dangerous, and it seems like every player ends up getting a concussion throughout their career. Running backs, especially in the NFL, are always getting

hurt and have a short career because of small injuries or even more common concussions that mess up their head for the rest of their lives. Champion (2021) writes, “At the high school level, football accounts for roughly 60% of the concussions that happen to athletes yearly, according to the Brain Injury Research Institute.” Out of all the sports in the world, football has 60% of all concussions that happen to athletes. This is a terrible statistic to have for the sport. Parents are worried about their children playing football, especially at a young age, their necks are not that strong, and they sometimes have no idea how to safely take or give a hit to someone. I have seen kids come flying in for a tackle with their eyes shut and their head down instead of up, this is how players get hurt and sometimes can even get paralyzed.

Easterbrook (2019) says, “Texas, center of the “Friday night lights” universe, now limits twice-a-day practices and forbids them on consecutive days. Ohio, birthplace of the N.F.L., now limits contact to 10 practices each summer. As of this month, New Jersey allows just 15 minutes per week of practice contact during the regular season. Previously, contact was allowed almost every day.” Easterbrook believes this will reduce the amount of head-to-head contact, meaning young kids that make it to the NFL, will make it with less neurological problems. I really like these rule changes that are happening around the country. From my own experience I know practice can be just as dangerous as a real game, so these changes are beneficial. I agree that reducing the amount of full contact practices and adding more safety rules will help make football safer. Easterbrooks writes about the NFL concussion statistics, “Concussions are down. Numerous rules changes led to the N.F.L. reporting 214 concussions last season, versus 281 the season before. Over the five prior seasons, the average was 243 concussions.” The fact that there were 214 concussions in one year says a lot, but that statistic is

slowly decreasing and hopefully goes even further down this season with more rule changes to help with player safety.

Easterbrook (2019) writes, “The youth level — before high school — is where the concussion issue is most troubling. As Kathleen Bachynski, an assistant professor of public health at Muhlenberg College, explains, “The public health significance of football is almost entirely among the young, because most who play organized football are children.”” I agree with Easterbrook, I believe that the players that play in the NFL with concussions most likely had concussion problems in their youth football. We need to start changing the rules for these young players so they can make it to their professional career without a concussion history. Easterbrook writes about youth football, “Research published in the journal JAMA Pediatrics suggests that some 78,000 concussions occur per year at the youth football level. That’s 364 traumatic brain injuries in little boys (and occasionally, little girls) for each one in a grown man earning millions of dollars” That is ridiculous that these many kids are getting brain injuries yearly, especially compared to how many professional athletes are, even though the pros are making millions of dollars at this risk and kids are just going out there for free having fun. I believe youth football needs to be made way safer since they have more risk and aren’t getting paid millions of dollars, like the professionals in the NFL are.

I think football stances are also a thing that could be changed or fixed to make the game safer. Easterbrook (2019) writes about football stances, “the N.F.L. should bar three-point and four-point stances. In both stances, players begin a play with their heads low, exposed to helmet-to-helmet contact” I agree, players are getting more hurt when they are in these stances and they always have their head low, risking getting head contact. Easterbrook goes on to explain why football

should change to two-point stances, “Research shows that offensive linemen, usually in a three-point stance, suffer more concussions than defensive linemen, often standing when the ball is snapped. There is no reason football needs the three-point and four-point stances. Indeed, in recent years N.F.L. players have increasingly opted for a two-point stance, because it better suits today’s wide-open, pass-happy style of game. If the N.F.L. banned the stances, the N.C.A.A. and high schools would follow” The NFL needs to start making an effort to keep their own players safe so that they can have an enjoyable life outside of football, and the NFL needs to keep the youth in mind considering they are the future of football and they deserve to have rules and guidelines to keep their body and brain safe because most of them don’t know the consequences unsafe football can cause them.

This essay reminded me of NFL Dolphins quarterback, Tua Tagovailoa when he got hit so hard that he tried to get up and just fell over. This was the start of his concussion, but the doctor gave Tua the clear to play again and Tua got another concussion right away! This is a clear example that the NFL is just not doing a good enough job with the safety of their players. This showed me how serious concussions are in the football career and how they can affect somebody for the rest of their lives. Antonio brown was a wide receiver in the NFL, but he got a concussion, and he just went crazy, doing very disturbing and non-professional things outside of football all because of his concussion that messed his brain up. Antonio brown was playing a game against the Jets, and he got mad at the coaches, so he just took off all of his gear and his shirt then just jogged off the field. This ended Antonio Brown’s football career and it only got worse for him after that incident. Easterbrook makes it clear that they believe football will keep changing its rules and safety protocols to make it a safe enough sport to stick

around. Football means a whole lot to me and a lot of others in this world, many would dread life without football existing, and I do not see it leaving anytime soon.

## **References**

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