

## **Should football be banned?**

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Football is a great American sport that has been around for years, but people now are starting to wonder, should football be banned? Football is a high contact sport and injury has become an issue for those of youth players. Being these parents, they don't want their children to get injured which is 100 percent understandable, because the big injury people are starting to get which is the concern is concussion. According to the CDC, 2019 "A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth" (CDC, 2019). This is one of the major reasons parents don't want their kids to play the sport. They also feel because of the injury it's not worth it to play because there's a small chance, they'll make it past high school onto the bigger leagues such as college and nothing is purely gained from the sport. Although, throughout my football career high school, middle school, and elementary school these years have taught me a lot about myself and who I want to be. The sport of football is of course a heavy contact sport, but preventative measures do take place to make sure less injury happens while playing. I personally believe the sport shouldn't be banned because you can learn how to take loss and win with class, tackling form plays into safety, gear plays into safety, the comradery from playing the sport and the psychical benefits gained from playing the sport.

Head injury is one of the major reasons people are deterred from the sport, it is believed that it is the most common injury to occur playing the sport of football, but the reality is that only 5%-10% of youth will get a concussion playing. This can obviously still add up to be a decent number depending on the population of the sport, but in the grand scheme of things it is very little. With all the contact that plays a factor into the sport such

as blocking, tackling, and attacking on defense the odds are usually in your favor. Which is of course great for anyone playing the sport that is concerned about injury. According to UW medicine newsroom they say that “New research from UW Medicine’s Sports Health and Safety Institute and Seattle Children’s Research Institute found concussion rates among football players ages 5 to 14 were higher than previously reported, with five out of every 100 youth, or 5 percent, sustaining a football-related concussion each season” (UW medicine newsroom). This of course seems a lot better than the original idea that concussion is super common among youth athletes.

Football can be dangerous for youth athletes but if you wear the correct gear it can play a major role in safety and increase your ability to stay in the game. Of course, football is dangerous due to its aggressive physical contact, but the if the correct gear is worn it can help prevent some of the major injuries such as knee (MCL, ACL, and PCL) which is prevented by knee pads or concussion which is prevented a helmet. Though these methods are not 100 percent going to reduce your chances of acquiring an injury it does help significantly to prevent those injuries from happening. Other items such as shoulder pads will help prevent fractures and strains (OrthoNC, 2023). Many items of protection are vital to the game of football for protecting the player, which makes it extra important that you wear those items. The best way to keep a player in the game is protection, basically wearing the items to prevent the injury before it even happens. Injuries are a major reason why people want to get rid of the sport of football, but correct gear will help prevent that from happening and will keep your child or yourself in the game for as long as possible.

The connections made along the way with football are unbeatable compared to any other sport that I have played. I have played a decent number of sports such as hockey, baseball, basketball, track and field, lacrosse, swimming, and golf but nothing has beat the connections I've made with my teammates with team dinners, group hangouts it feels more like a family than a team to me. We all make it important to treat each other as we are one because I have learned from the other sports that I have played that it is easy to single out one person and that person may act like the star of the team and get that cockiness, but when it comes to football, you just can't win with one person. The whole team must play as one or no games will be won. You could have a five-star recruit on your team, with a prestige division one offer and if the whole team banks on that one person it just won't work. Building those connections helps boost the team moral and the ability to play, so the coaches made it important we did things as a team such as coaching kids, going to camps, doing competitions, doing volunteer work together. With all that we were able to play the best we could and have multiple winning records. Other football players have talked about their personal experiences such as NFL defensive end Marcellus Wiley who said, "Times have changed, and rookies have changed since (I was a rookie in) 1997. ... I was a little blindsided by the rites of passage of being a rookie, which for me included getting duct taped to the goal post, getting baby powder poured on you, or Gatorade, or water, or basically anything sticky that was fluid, something to totally embarrass you. You know, clothes being torn, being taped to a goal post in the nude. But I did it all with a smile. I never thought I was a victim or being bullied." (USA Today, 2012). This just goes to that those hazing moments of the players having fun go along way into how a player views the team which can have a positive impact.

There are many physical benefits to playing for the youth if they can play football. Football is a very active and quickly passed sport which means the player also must be capable of doing that. So physical health is important, but players do a lot together such as group lifting sessions and workouts as well as sprints. Physical stamina is a benefit gained by playing the sport from a long drive on the field and when doing those sprints in practice. cardiovascular ability will also increase when playing the sport (NHS inform, 2022). Mostly from the same thing, as building stamina. The sport is so physically demanding that it causes the body to push itself and work harder all around whether it be running the football, blocking someone, or trying to prevent the team from scoring on their drive. Physical strength will also increase when playing football (NHS inform, 2022). This being because of the group work outs and lifts, also the fact that you are just pushing people around when playing the sport. Football overall will reach more beneficiaries than the bad parts of the sport, which can overall help your child.

Playing football can also teach kids can learn to take loss with character and learn to win with class and not be all cocky and gloat about it. One thing that is made clear when playing football is to win with class, so we would do the line and say good game to every player and shake their hand or give a high five. When doing that it was made clear you don't have to get in their face and show off and gloat, but you can just shake their hand and say, "good game bro." On the opposite side of that it can also teach kids that there's nothing bad with losing and that they can bounce back from that loss. Everybody loses at least once in their life, and in football it happens all the time. One thing that was important was figuring out how to bounce back from that and win the next week. Moving on and having short term memory loss as my coach used to put it. Coming back and trying your hardest is the most

important thing with losing, playing the sport of football can teach that. Kids can learn that losing isn't so bad and that people can improve themselves afterwards to change the outcome next time. Everybody is going to lose at some point, it's just what you are going to do about it, that can help you better yourself. With winning, the sport can teach kids that you can win and win with class and not be all cocky about it.

In addition to Playing the sport of football, it can teach kids how to win with class and lose with character and progress, how to protect themselves from injury, help them gain physical benefits, build connections with people, and that head injury isn't as common as it seems. I have played football for a big chunk of my life, I have seen the ins and outs of injury, been in rehab, had concussions and fractures. Coming back each year will always come down to the best decisions I have ever made in my life. Making those connections and growing with my team is always something I will cherish, and I wish every child that plays the sport had my experience. Let the kids play the sport if they want and trust me they can learn a few things.

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