

Football Participation Waiver

South Carolina High Schools

The purpose of this document is to warn students and their parents of the possibility of serious injury or death while playing a contact sport.

Football is a contact sport and injuries will occur. Safety is the major concern of the Rules Committees of the National Federation of High School Associations and recent rule changes have reduced the number of serious injuries.

This document does not cover all potential injury possibilities in playing football, but it is an attempt to make the players and their parents aware that fundamentals and proper fitting equipment is important to their safety and enjoyment in playing football.

Tackling, Blocking & Running the Ball

By rule, the helmet is not to be used as a "ram". Initial contact is not to be made with the helmet. It is not possible to play the game safely or correctly without making contact with the helmet when properly blocking and tackling an opponent. Therefore, technique is most important to prevention of injuries.

Tackling and blocking techniques are basically the same. The player should always be in a position of balance, knees bent, back straight, body SLIGHTLY bent forward, HEAD UP, target area as near to the body as possible with the main contact being made with the shoulder.

Blocking and tackling by not putting the helmet as close to the body as possible could result in shoulder injury such as a separation or a pinched nerve in the neck area. The dangers of not following the proper techniques can be from minor to disabling to even death. The reason for following the safety rules in making contact with the upper body and helmet is that improper body alignment can put the spinal column in a vulnerable position for injury.

If the head is bent downward, the cervical (neck) vertebrae are in a bind and contact on the TOP OF THE HELMET could result in a dislocation, nerve damage, paralysis or even death. If the back is not straight, the thoracic (mid-back) and lumbar vertebrae are also vulnerable to injury with similar results if contact again is made to the TOP OF THE HELMET.

Basic Contact Position & Fundamental Technique

If the knees are not bent, the chance of knee injury is greatly increased. Fundamentally, a player should be in the proper hitting position at all times during live ball play. The injury could be anything from strained muscles, to ankle injuries, to serious knee injuries requiring surgery. The rules have made blocking below the waist (outside a two-yard by four-yard area next to the football) illegal. Cleats have been restricted to no more than 1/2 inch to further help in preventing knee injuries. A runner with the ball, however, may be tackled around the legs.

In tackling, the rules prohibit initial contact with the helmet or grabbing the face mask or edge of the helmet. These restrictions were placed in the rules because of serious injuries resulting from non-compliance to these safety precautions. Initial helmet contact could result in a bruise, dislocation, broken bone, head injury, internal injury such as kidneys, spleen, bladder, etc. Grabbing the face mask or helmet edge could result in a neck injury which could be anything from a muscle strain to a dislocation, nerve injury, spinal damage causing paralysis or death.

Non-Football Participation Waiver

Serious, catastrophic, and perhaps fatal injury may result from athletic participation.

By its very nature, competitive athletics may put students in situations in which **serious, catastrophic, and sometimes fatal accidents and illnesses** may occur.

Many forms of athletic competition result in violent physical contact among players. The use of athletic equipment may result in accidents, injury, or death. Strenuous physical exertion and numerous other exposures to the risk of injury occur while participating in interscholastic athletics.

Students and their parents must assess the risks involved in such sports participation and make their choice to participate in spite of those risks. No amount of instruction, precaution, or supervision will totally eliminate the risk of injury or illness associated with participation in athletic activities. Just as driving an automobile involves choice of risk, athletic participation by middle or senior high school students also may be inherently dangerous. The obligation of parents and students in making this choice to participate cannot be overstated. There have been accidents resulting in death, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other very serious permanent physical impairments as a result of athletic competition.

By granting permission for your son/daughter to participate in athletic competition, you, the parent or guardian are acknowledging that you fully understand and comprehend that such risks exist.

Students will be properly instructed in the proper techniques to be used in athletic competition and in the proper utilization of all equipment worn or used in practices and competitions. Students must always adhere to that instruction and utilization and must refrain from improper use or techniques.

As previously stated, **NO** amount of instruction, precaution, and supervision will totally eliminate all risk of serious, catastrophic, or fatal injury or illness.

If any of the foregoing is not completely understood, please contact the school's principal, athletic director, or certified athletic trainer for further information and clarification.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I/We have read the above information and acknowledge the risks involved with participating in interscholastic athletics for Spartanburg County School District Six.

Athlete Signature:

Date: _____

Parent's Signature:

Date: _____