

News Sports Writing

2013 KSPA REGIONAL CONTEST

Assignment

You have 90 minutes to write a 250-word story previewing an event that will take place at your school on Monday, Feb. 25.

Background

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) recently approved new rules for the 2013 football season. The NFHS wants to minimize player injuries related to helmets coming off during the game.

Last year, the NFHS changed a substitution rule. Players now must sit out one play if their helmet comes off while the ball is live. This year, the NFHS Football Rules Committee approved three additional rules that are extensions of that change.

- An illegal personal contact foul was added to Rule 9-4-3: "No player or nonplayer shall initiate contact with an opposing player whose helmet has come completely off."
- A new listing in Rule 9-6-4 will state that it is illegal participation "for a player whose helmet comes completely off during a down to continue to participate beyond the immediate action in which the player is engaged."
- In Rule 3-5-10, if the helmet comes completely off during the down (which is what the rule was changed to in 2012) or subsequent dead-ball action related to the down (this is the new part) – and is not directly attributable to a foul by the opponent – the player must leave the game for at least one down, with the exception of halftime or overtime intermission.

When this occurs, an official's time-out shall be called.

President Obama earlier this year commented on the death of former National Football League player Junor Seau. Seau died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the chest last May. Seau was

Description

You are a member of Ad Astra High School's newspaper staff. Your editor has assigned you to write a 300-word story using the information provided.

School Info

Name: Ad Astra High School
Location: Aspera, Kansas
Mascot: Box Turtles
Enrollment: 850 (grades 9-12)
School Colors: Green & Gold
Yearbook: The Honeybee
Newspaper: The Star

Contest Info

This is a carry-in contest.

Please attach your assigned contest number in the upper right-hand corner on the back of your photo.

Do not put your name on the entry. If you do, your entry will be disqualified.

Students are not to request help or advice from anyone other than the KSPA Executive Director. All work must be that of the contestant.



diagnosed with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). Last month, Seau's family filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the NFL.

In response to increasing awareness of the dangers of concussions and brain injuries triggered by school sports, State Rep. Carol King (D-Aspera), will host a forum on preventing football head injuries from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday, Feb. 25 at Ad Astra High School.

Ad Astra Principal Emmylou Harris and the school's football trainer did an informal study

of the Box Turtles' varsity football practices and games the last three years. Harris and trainer Jacques Strappe estimate that 20 different AAHS players have sustained a total of 32 concussions in that time, or about 1.6 concussions per affected player. Divided by three years, that about seven players and 11 concussions per year.

Opinions and viewpoints expressed during the forum will help King decide how she will support legislation. For more information, call (620) 444-9999.

Quotes

Brad Garrett, chair of the NFHS Football Rules Committee

"Player safety has been and will continue to be the top priority for members of the NFHS Football Rules Committee. These rules changes regarding helmet-less players are more examples of the group's commitment to minimize risk within the game."

Carole King, state representative from Aspera

"The Kansas legislature passed landmark concussion legislation two years ago. While that bill was a strong starting point, I believe there is much more we need to do to prevent temporary and permanent brain injuries in our young athletes."

President Barack Obama (in an interview with the Huffington Post)

"Those of us who love the sport are going to have to wrestle with the fact that it will probably change gradually to try to reduce some of the violence."

Duffy Devaney, Ad Astra's head football coach

"I'm all for safety in every sport. Maybe next we should put helmets on basketball players and soccer players. I mean, I just read about some girl who got too many concussions from playing soccer. Why does football always get singled out for these discussions?"

"We lost Jimmy Football for several key plays last year during the John Brown game. If Jimmy's in there for that big fourth down on the 10-yard line, we go for it instead of missing that damn field goal. Son of a buck!"

Note: Ad Astra lost 17-14 to cross-town rival John Brown last year, ending Ad Astra's hopes at making the state playoffs.

Emmylou Harris, Ad Astra principal

“Carole called and asked if we could let her use the lunchroom for her forum. I said, ‘yes.’ It’s the least we can do to make sure our kids are protected. Concussions and their prevention have become a major focus for our leadership team here at AAHS. I want to thank Mr. Strappe for his help in our study.”

Jimmy Football, Ad Astra’s starting quarterback, a junior

“The new rule they put in this past year sucks. Players from the other teams would deliberately try to pop off my helmet so I’d miss the next play. Now if my helmet comes off, I’m supposed to just stop? I may just have to duct-tape my helmet around my head this year. No way we’re losing to JB because my stupid helmet falls off.”