

A Message from BFS Editor Kim Goss, MS



Obama Gets a Heads-Up on Concussions

BFS is a leader in educating physical education and sports coaches about the dangers of concussion. It's a serious problem that now has the attention of the president of the United States.

On May 29 President Obama opened a daylong summit about concussions. The event attracted more than 200 attendees, including coaches, athletes, parents, representatives of pro sports leagues, and medical professionals. For President Obama, the issue was personal.

"When I was young and played football briefly, there were a couple of times where I'm sure that that ringing sensation in my head and the need to sit down for a while might have been a mild concussion," said Obama. "At the time you didn't think anything of it. The awareness is improved today, but not by much. So the total number of young people who are impacted by this early on is probably bigger than we know."

How serious a problem is the incidence of concussion among athletes? It's estimated that brain injuries now result in approximately 250,000 emergency room visits annually by young athletes. As a result, fewer youths are participating in football – and lawsuits are on the rise.

The NFL is a litigant in a \$765 million settlement involving more than 4,500 former players who have suffered brain trauma from the game. The National Hockey League is also facing a major class-action lawsuit as a result of head injuries that occurred on the ice.

On the positive side, the May 29 summit highlighted an array of financial support from entities that are taking a proactive approach to the concussion issue. There is a \$30 million joint research effort by the Department of Defense and the NCAA for a concussion study involving 37,000 college athletes, and a

\$10 million concussion program funded by New York Giants co-owner Steve Tisch at UCLA to develop a concussion database. The NFL has been a big supporter in helping deal with this issue. They are providing \$25 million of funding over the next three years to work with the National Athletic Trainers Association to increase the number of athletic trainers in high school, \$16 million to the National Institutes of Health to fund a study on the effects of repetitive concussion, and \$1.5 million in funding to USA Football for its concussion recognition and awareness program.

Although there is a long way to go in the prevention and treatment of concussion, the White House Summit is a great start.

Kim Goss, MS
Editor in Chief, *BFS* magazine
kim@bfsmail.com