

# Program instructs to reduce football concussions

Coach gives Heads Up Football a thumbs up

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

DAYVILLE — Football coaches and players throughout Oregon are getting a “heads up” regarding the prevention of concussions with a new program called Heads Up Football.

Grant County coaches have incorporated the new rules which become an Oregon School Activities Association requirement in 2016 for the 249 football-playing high schools.

The Heads Up Football requirements are in addition to the existing OSAA protocols that benefit the student-athletes.

The program includes teaching tackling and blocking techniques designed to reduce helmet contact, also addressing concussion recognition and response; sudden cardiac arrest protocols; hydration and heat preparedness; and instruction on proper helmet and shoulder pad fitting.

Dayville/Monument head football coach Nathaniel Ashley has taken the class.



Eagle file photo

“The Heads Up program is all about eliminating head

injuries, and it’s a good program,” he said. “The class was a lot about correct fit of pads and helmets, as well as different techniques to minimize injuries with contact.”

OSAA Executive Director Tom Welter said the program is part of an ongoing effort to minimize risks in the sport.

“This program will ensure that all coaches, players and parents will receive consistent technique training and make the game as safe as possible,” he said.

Dr. Michael Koester, chairperson of the OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, says the Heads Up Football requirement in Oregon is logical consider-

**Football teams in Oregon have new training and rules to help prevent concussions with the Heads Up Program.**



Nathaniel Ashley

ing in 2008 OSAA became the first state high school activities association to prohibit same day return to play

for athletes with a suspected concussion.

“The committee sees this as a natural next step as we continue to look at innovative ways to minimize the risk of all football injuries, but particularly concussions,” Dr. Koester said. “This is an opportunity for high school coaches to set a standard for the youth leagues in their communities across the state. Ideally, we’ll have youth coaches getting certified as well, allowing for continuity of tackling techniques and safety protocols through an athlete’s entire playing experience.”

“As a team physician and the parent of a high school football player, I’m excited about Heads Up Football.”

## More info

**USA Football’s Heads Up Football program includes the following components:**

### Coaching education

- Coaches successfully complete online training through the NFHS-USA Football High School Heads Up Football course at NFHSLearn.com, covering football fundamentals and all-sport-relevant topics of concussion recognition and response, sudden cardiac arrest protocols and hydration and heat preparedness.

### Concussion recognition and response

- Coaches gain in-person instruction and are assessed on CDC concussion recognition and response.
- Coaches, parents and players are taught concussion-related protocols at the start of the season.

### Equipment fitting

- Coaches, parents and players are taught proper helmet and shoulder pad fitting.

### Heads Up Blocking and Tackling

- Series of fundamental drills reinforce tackling and blocking mechanics, teaching players how to perform these basic football skills with a focus on reducing helmet contact.

### Sudden cardiac arrest

- Instruction on how to have plans and procedures in place to quickly react in the case of cardiac events, the No. 1 cause of death among young athletes during exercise.

### Heat and hydration

- Coaches, parents and players learn heat and hydration safety measures provided by the Korey Stringer Institute at the University of Connecticut.

### Player Safety Coach

- Appointed by each high school, this individual ensures that High School Heads Up Football principles and protocols are properly taught and applied within a program.

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Curt and I have experienced such an outpouring of care, thoughtfulness and selfless giving. We have spent weeks writing personal thank you notes to many friends and family, and we also want to thank this amazing community we live in; fire fighters, restaurants, people at the pavilion, pastors, friends, and family. Grant County, you shine with the love of God! Our heartfelt thanks to each beautiful act of kindness that has caused us to have hope, and look forward rather than behind. One day, God will bring beauty from these ashes and we hope for all our neighbors His peace and His hope. Hope defined: A confident, joyful expectation that good will come.

God bless each of you,  
*Curt and Cindy Qual*

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## Former players to take on football field

Mark calendars: Old Man Football & Taco Feed

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Glory days are returning to Grant Union’s Three Flags Field.

Everyone is invited to the Old Man Football & Taco Feed fundraiser on Friday, Oct. 23, where Grant Union alumni and football player parents will get in on grid action.

Football boys will coach the teams, and serve as referees.

The evening starts with a taco feed 5-6:30 p.m. at the school cafeteria, with the game beginning at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 a person.

The event benefits the junior and senior high football teams, and tickets may be purchased from the football players or head coach Jason Miller.

Awards will be presented to the players at the close of the game.

Tickets for a tailgate-party raffle basket will also be sold that night with the winner announced Friday, Oct. 30, at the senior night football game versus Imbler.

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