



## Concussion clinic open for high school football season

Indianapolis - Tougher rules are in place for athletes who take a hit to the head.

Effective this year, high school football players who show signs, symptoms or behaviors of a concussion must be removed from the game or practice immediately and return only when cleared by a health care professional.

The bottom line: Concussions are nothing to play with, and the message may be lost in all the excitement.

Operation Football is here. At Cathedral, they've studied up on Carmel for the opener and defensive end Evan Pulliam knows his role.

1 "You either take hits or give them," he said.

Pulliam knows that even when the helmets on the other side of the line match yours, the hits can hurt..

"During practice one day I had one head-on collision and I sort of blacked out for a second," he said. "Not until the next day where I actually noticed things weren't going right, I couldn't concentrate in school, couldn't look at the lights. I really didn't like loud noises. It was just one huge headache."

Evan was diagnosed with a concussion with the help of a computer-based Impact test. It's where athletes are asked to recall a series of figures, or remember placement's of X's and O's all to establish a baseline score, so doctors can measure how your focus, memory, and reaction time compare after an injury.

"We had 200 kids in our program last year and we had ten concussions. Eight were on-the-field concussions. Two were non-football-related concussions," said Cathedral Head Coach Rick Streiff.

Prevention is vital. That includes helping the athletes adjust the air in their helmets to get a good fit.

"Just know that it fits enough so that it doesn't move as much as it does because with no air it will wobble around," said Drake Myers, Cathedral junior corner back.

Coaches implore athletes to speak up.

"That is something we can't see. You have to tell us," said Coach Streiff.

Evan concedes speaking up wasn't his first instinct "because we are afraid of losing a starting job or anything and it takes, I'm not going to lie, it takes some guts to maybe tell a coach or Mr. Hunker about our injuries and luckily with me I finally had to say something to Mr. Hunker."

Concussion specialists say younger athletes take longer to heal and a second impact before an injury is healed is especially dangerous. To reduce that risk, they are now offering a new service.

"We've got a hotline during the games on Friday and Saturday where they can call our number," said Dr. Terry Horner, IN Sports Concussion Network.

There is a new Methodist Sports Medical Center walk-in clinic on Saturday morning. It's part of a national effort to make athletes realize that concussions are nothing to play with. Younger athletes take longer to heal and are more prone to repeat injury.

Know the symptoms: headache, dizziness, sensitivity to light and sound. Watch your athlete. A majority of concussions do not include a loss of consciousness and are not detected by a CT Scan or a MRI.

Saturday Concussion Walk in Clinic  
201 Pennsylvania Parkway  
Suite 100  
8-10am Saturdays  
Hotline: 317-571-8233