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## **NFL HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE—MAY 22, 2013**

### **STEELERS HOST YOUTH FOOTBALL EVENTS**

On Friday, May 17, the Steelers held their first ever Youth Football Clinic for Moms and Kids at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Sports Performance Complex.

While the kids took part in a football skills clinic at the team's indoor practice field, the moms heard from several individuals about the steps that are being taken to ensure that safety remains the priority for youth football players.

Among the guest speakers were **PATRICK HUBER**, the Project Lead from UPMC Concussion Program, **DAVE HARDESTY** and **JEFF RIMBEY** from Riddell, **SCOTT HALLENBECK**, Executive Director of USA Football who shared the concept of Heads Up Football and **JAIMEE HOKE**, wife of former Steelers' defensive lineman **CHRIS HOKE**.

"I definitely feel more comfortable when I know their equipment is fitted just to them, the coaches are properly trained with the right techniques and teaching them how to tackle and they are aware of the signs of concussions so the kids are safe. The better the awareness, the more it puts me at ease," Hoke said.

The focus on youth football continued on Saturday with the Steelers' annual Coaching Clinic. The clinic offered classroom and on-field instruction, preparing coaches for the season with information on Coaching Philosophy, concussion awareness, proper equipment fitting and more. Coaches also heard from Steelers' conditioning coordinator **GARRETT GIEMONT**.

"I think the parents are pivotal, but you can't change the game if the coaches don't buy in," said Hallenbeck. "The coaches are priority number one in getting them to understand what we are trying to do and change the culture, ultimately accomplishing our most significant goal which is the health and safety of every single youth and high school player. We want them to have a better, safer playing experience and that starts with coaches."

For the Steelers' recap and video of the event, click [here](#).

For more information on Heads Up Football, click [here](#).

### **CAROLINA PANTHERS, USO of NORTH CAROLINA HOST CONCUSSION CULTURE CHANGE FORUM, NFL PLAY 60 YOUTH FOOTBALL CLINIC AT FORT BRAGG**

On May 14, the Carolina Panthers, in partnership with Lenovo and the USO of North Carolina, engaged players and nearly 100 military service members from the Army and Air Force, Department of Defense civilians and their family members in a culture change forum at Fort Bragg. The group discussed football's and the military's cultural responses to injury, focusing on enhanced concussion awareness and diagnosis, return to play and return to action protocols and other health-related topics.

Former Panthers defensive end **MIKE RUCKER** (Carolina 1999-2007), representing the club with Panthers center **RYAN KALIL**, emphasized the significance of potential brain injury and proper recognition and recovery.

"I can have my ankle replaced, I can have my hip replaced, but the brain can't [be] transplanted, and that's what really turned the light on for me that I needed to take this seriously," Rucker said. "This isn't going to be something that happens overnight. But when you look 10, 15, 20 years from now, hopefully, you'll have seen a big difference in that culture and it's changed."

Kalil, a three-time Pro Bowl selection, echoed Rucker's statements.

"I think the NFL and the Army have done an incredible job being at the forefront of this," Kalil said. "It's helping to kill the stigma of that you're not tough if you don't carry on or don't continue."

Prior to the moderated concussion-awareness discussion, Panthers players and cheerleaders and Fort Bragg active military members led 225 local fifth grade students through football skills and endurance drills as a part of the NFL PLAY 60 youth fitness campaign.

For the Panthers' recap and video of the event, click [here](#).

### **USA FOOTBALL SAFETY SURVEILLANCE STUDY**

Fewer than 4 percent of youth players surveyed in a USA Football-sanctioned study sustained a concussion in the 10 leagues examined. The data was gathered during the first year of a two-year youth football safety surveillance study, which will be conducted through the 2013 youth season by The Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention.

The independent scientific study will continue to monitor 10 youth football leagues in six states this fall and is believed to be the first of its scope in youth football's 80-plus year history.

More than 90 percent of the nearly 2,000 players in the study did not sustain an injury that restricted participation. Of those who did, the most common were contusions (35 percent) and ligament sprains (15 percent).

"We need more studies like this across all of youth sports," said **DR. PATRICK KERSEY**, a physician at St. Vincent Sports Performance and USA Football medical director. "Such a commitment to research is how we advance player safety, determine best practices and continue football's evolution, which has always been part of the game's legacy. Our hope is that more sports will take similar steps for their young athletes."

For the full Associated Press story, click [here](#).

For more information on the NFL's health and safety work, please visit [www.nflevolution.com](http://www.nflevolution.com)

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