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NFL HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE—JUNE 19, 2013

YOUTH FOOTBALL COACHES GATHER AT GREEN BAY PACKERS HEALTH & SAFETY FORUM

The Green Bay Packers hosted an NFL Health and Safety Forum for more than 50 youth and high school football coaches Monday, June 10, at Lambeau Field.

PEPPER BURRUSS, Packers head athletic trainer and NFL Head, Neck and Spine Committee member; **KURT FIELDING**, Packers assistant athletic trainer; **RED BATTY**, Packers equipment manager; and **DR. MARK GARDON**, board certified neurosurgeon, addressed safety matters facing young athletes at the event, which was the first of its kind for the Packers. Each speaker addressed their role in promoting player health and safety, and discussed the ways the NFL is making sports safer for all athletes. The group also participated in a Q&A with the coaches following the presentations from each instructor.

"We're glad to be able to host this event today and help educate our state's youth football coaches," said Burruss. "Safety is not optional, especially when it comes to our youth athletes, and we are working to make the game safer through forums like this."

For more information on the Packers' event, click [here](#).

NFL PARTICIPATES IN TBI SYMPOSIUM AT PENTAGON

The NFL participated in a symposium last week at the Pentagon hosted by Secretary of Defense **CHUCK HAGEL**, and including Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff **GENERAL MARTIN DEMPSEY**, and Secretary of the Army **JOHN MCHUGH**. The forum served as an opportunity for a premier group of the nation's neuroscience experts to exchange ideas and discuss traumatic brain injury science with the military and senior civilian Defense officials. Academic leaders, research institutions, as well as select organizations including the NFL, provided insights on research, treatment protocols and public-private partnerships designed to accelerate progress. The results of the symposium's discussion will be submitted to Secretary Hagel as recommendations for the acceleration of traumatic brain injury diagnosis and treatment.

NFL TEAMS ACROSS THE LEAGUE HOST USA FOOTBALL EVENTS

NFL teams, including the **ARIZONA CARDINALS**, **HOUSTON TEXANS**, **NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS**, **SAN DIEGO CHARGERS** and the **WASHINGTON REDSKINS**, continue to engage and educate local youth football organizations and coaches in partnership with USA Football throughout the summer.

Arizona Cardinals

The Arizona Cardinals recently held a USA Football Heads Up Football launch event for more than 850 youth and high school football players at the University of Phoenix Stadium.

The launch took place during the club's sixth annual High School Football Player Skills & Education Camp. The free camp included on-field drills and classroom sessions on life skills, nutrition, physical health and a Heads Up Football station.

The focus on youth football continued later in the month, when more than 200 players and coaches from youth leagues participated in a camp featuring 20 Cardinals rookies. First-round pick **JONATHAN COOPER** led a Heads Up Football station at the camp.

Houston Texans

Houston Texans President **JAMEY ROOTES**, USA Football Regional Manager **MATT DELUZIO** and Cypress Creek High School Head Coach **GREG MC CAIG** announced the launch of the Texans' Heads Up Football initiative during a joint

press conference on June 5. The launch includes a free coaches summit at the Methodist Training Center on July 20, where attendees will learn about Heads Up Football philosophies.

“As an organization our goal is to be involved in the game of football from peewee to the pros and everything in between,” Rootes said. “This is another opportunity for us to improve the game through Heads Up Football. A number of leagues throughout the city are going to have the opportunity for their coaches to go through the Heads Up Football training, all about concussion awareness, about equipment fitting, and, importantly, about playing the game correctly.”

For more information on the Texans’ event, click [here](#).

New England Patriots

The New England Patriots, in conjunction with USA Football, recently welcomed youth league commissioners from throughout the region at the USA Football New England Youth Leadership Forum, hosted at Gillette Stadium. The Patriots hold the annual gathering to cover best practices and new ideas to improve player safety for participants at the sport’s grassroots level.

USA Football regional manager **ED PASSINO** trained representatives from more than 2,000 youth leagues on the principles of Heads Up Football: coaching education, concussion awareness, equipment fitting and Heads Up tackling.

“I enjoyed the contact section, as far as how to tackle properly,” said John Cunha, president of the Rhode Island Pre-Teen Football League. “I’m going to make every coach join, and it will be mandatory for all coaches in our league to be certified into the Heads Up program.”

For more information on the Patriots’ event, click [here](#).

San Diego Chargers

USA Football conducted a Heads Up Football Player Safety Coach clinic at Chargers Park last Saturday.

The clinic was led by former NFL players and USA Football Master Trainers **THOMAS WILLIAMS** and **MICHAEL HAYNES**. They instructed nearly 70 San Diego youth football coaches on proper tackling techniques, concussion recognition and response protocols, proper helmet and shoulder pad fitting, and Heads Up practice drills.

“One of the things USA Football and the NFL is trying to do is create a different culture when it comes to football,” said Haynes. “For the longest time there was an old school mentality that was causing players to get hurt. So we’re trying to change that. What we’re trying to do today is teach the same fundamentals and terminology and explain to them why we’re doing what we’re doing.”

For more information on the Chargers’ event, click [here](#).

Washington Redskins

Youth football commissioners from Virginia met in May at a USA Football Youth Leadership Forum hosted by the Washington Redskins and Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation. Redskins Executive Vice President and General Manager **BRUCE ALLEN** welcomed the commissioners to Redskins Park for a day of learning, discussion and an exclusive tour of the Redskins Park Training Facility.

Passino discussed with the participants concussion recognition and response, coaching education, equipment fitting and Heads Up tackling technique, the foundations of USA Football’s Heads Up Football program.

“USA Football’s Heads Up Football is such a great safety standard that I see it becoming the standard for teaching tackling soon,” said **ERIC HUNTER**, commissioner of recruitment for the Virginia Youth Football League based in Chesterfield, Virginia. “All of the leagues represented agreed the coaching certification (process) is an excellent way of assuring parents and players they are participating in a league that cares about the welfare of the players.”

For more information on the Redskins’ event, click [here](#).

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

DENVER BRONCOS RING OF FAME LB RANDY GRADISHAR TALKS HEADS UP FOOTBALL

Former Denver Broncos linebacker **RANDY GRADISHAR** (1974-1983), a member of the franchise’s Ring of Fame, attended the team’s minicamp on Wednesday at the invitation of head coach **JOHN FOX**. Gradishar, who played in 145 consecutive games for the Broncos, spoke to local media on his role representing the club as a USA Football Heads Up Football Ambassador to the Denver Police Athletic League teams.

“The Heads Up program is really exciting because it gives us an opportunity – for those of us who’ve played – in helping with the local youth leagues in the city, and particularly here in Denver and the PAL league,” Gradishar said. “I’m going to be involved with that this summer. Just talking about it as a former guy, what they’re trying to do and what they are doing on the safety of the game, it’s making it a healthier way of playing the game. It’s great that the NFL is looking at that and each NFL team [is looking at that]. What they’re saying is that there is concern; we want it to be as safe as possible for our young people, our pros, our college guys. It’s just the beginning of kicking this off and being a part of this. Being in the Denver community for 40 years and as a former Bronco, it’s really exciting to get involved on the youth side representing the Broncos.”

For more information on NFL players serving as Heads Up Football Ambassadors, click [here](#).

For more information on the NFL’s health and safety work, please visit www.nflevolution.com

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