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NFL HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE—AUGUST 28, 2013

NFL FOUNDATION DONATES EQUIPMENT TO HEADS UP FOOTBALL LEAGUE IN MOORE, OKLAHOMA

NFL Foundation Chairman and Dallas Cowboys Executive Vice President **CHARLOTTE JONES ANDERSON** joined former NFL players **KENNY BLAIR** and **ROY WILLIAMS** on Monday to announce a donation of equipment to the Oklahoma Elite Football League. The league lost its storage facility and equipment when tornadoes devastated the area in May. The announcement was made during an evening practice for the league.

The donation by the NFL Foundation replaced helmets, shoulder pads and tackling dummies. The Oklahoma Elite Football League is one of the more than 2,700 youth football leagues across the country that is participating in USA Football's Heads Up Football initiative. Blair and Williams are serving as Heads Up Football Ambassadors for two of the league's teams.

During the practice, Anderson, Blair and Williams had the chance to see the children practice Heads Up Football tackling techniques.

Q&A WITH DR. ELIZABETH PIEROTH OF NORTHSORE UNIVERSITY HEALTHSYSTEM

Dr. Elizabeth Pieroth of NorthShore University HealthSystem serves as neurological consultant for the Chicago Bears, Chicago Blackhawks, Chicago Fire and Chicago White Sox. Pieroth is also a member of the Heads Up Football Advisory Committee. She answered some questions on culture change and sports safety.

With kids heading back to the playing field this fall, what's the #1 thing you tell parents about youth sports safety?

I want all parents to know that youth sports organizations take the health and safety of their children very seriously. The governing bodies for each youth sport (football, baseball, hockey, soccer and many more) work diligently to examine injury rates in their sports and seek ways to reduce or eliminate those injuries. I would strongly encourage all parents to talk to the coaches or the heads of their local organizations to make sure they are following proper safety guidelines.

How does your experience with professional teams lend itself to treating youth athletes?

To work with athletes, professional all the way down to our youngest participants, you need to appreciate the heart of an athlete. That 10-year-old may not have the experience level of a pro player but he or she may have the same level of determination and love of their sport. We need to value the dedication of the amateur athlete as much as we do the professional.

What concerns do you hear from players and/or parents about head injuries?

The most frequent concern relates to the possibility of permanent dysfunction from a concussion. I explain to each parent that if the injury is managed well and the athlete does not suffer another concussion while they are healing from the first, we expect full recovery. Additionally, parents ask a great deal of questions about equipment. I tell them to be very skeptical of any products' claim that it reduces or eliminates concussion. To date, there are no helmets, mouth guards, headbands or other sport accessory that will fully prevent a concussion.

What sort of culture changes have you seen regarding head injuries across all sports?

I have been assessing athletes with concussions for 16 years now and have seen a dramatic shift. In the beginning of my career, athletes, their parents and the medical community as a whole tended to minimize the significance of concussions, even multiple concussive injuries. We have seen a rapid change in the focus on concussion, which

has resulted in much greater education for athletes, their parents and all those who care for these athletes. Unfortunately, we also have a significant amount of misinformation that is available to the public, which can cause some unnecessary concern. Our challenge now is to make sure that information available is scientifically sound and specific for various age groups and sports.

TEAMS HOST USA FOOTBALL/HEADS UP FOOTBALL EVENTS

Houston Texans

The Texans invited 30 youth football players from the Cy-Fair Sports Association's Spillane Texans to attend practice, meet players, and get a demonstration of proper tackling from General Manager **RICK SMITH**. The youth league is taking part in Heads Up Football beginning this season. Smith spoke about the importance of academics and teamwork. "I think it's important that we teach proper technique and remind these young men of the proper ways to tackle, proper equipment fitting and the certification process that we have for the coaches," Smith said. "All of those elements that are present in the USA Football program are very good for participants and for the game of football."

New York Giants

The Giants hosted a Heads Up Football Protection Tour event on August 20 at MetLife Stadium. USA Football Master Trainer and Northeast Region Manager **ED PASSINO** and former Giant Pro Bowl center **SHAUN O'HARA** instructed more than 150 youth football players and 100 parents from the tri-state area on Heads Up tackling, concussion awareness and equipment fitting.

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

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