



North East ISD Athletic Department

VIRGIL T. BLOSSOM ATHLETIC CENTER

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PLAYER SAFETY & FOOTBALL HELMETS

August 15, 2017

The North East Independent School District is committed to offering students opportunities for a well-rounded educational experience. One of the ways the District does that is to offer students the opportunity to participate in athletics, including football. The North East Athletic Department is committed to the safety of those who decide to play football at any grade level where it is offered. Although football is a contact sport, therefore carrying risk for any player, the Athletic Department takes steps necessary to provide the safest possible environment during practices, games, and any other related football activities.

Part of that commitment includes the provision of appropriate equipment to protect players during practices or games. With regard to football helmets that the North East Athletic Department provides for players, the District uses Riddell helmets, which comply with the rigorous safety certification standards set by the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE). The NOCSAE uses extensive testing to certify that athletic equipment, like football helmets, provides the best possible protection against head and neck injuries for players. The NOCSAE has absolutely certified the specific Riddell helmets the North East Athletic Department purchases and issues to all football players meet its scientifically tested standards. But for this certification, the North East Athletic Department would not use these helmets.

Recently, the North East Athletic Department has learned that an aggressive marketing effort has been undertaken to sell players' parents after-market outer shells to add to the existing Riddell helmets. These outer shells are being sold on the basis that they provide additional and necessary protection for players against concussions from football collisions. As part of its continuing commitment to safety, the District has researched whether there is any validity to these claims about the after-market outer shells.

The NOCSAE Board of Directors has stated that any additions to football helmets of any after-market item, including anything that changes the overall shape of the helmet (like an outer shell) "voids the certification of compliance with the NOCSAE standard." Riddell also has stated that any addition of an after-market product to the helmet, such as these outer shells, voids its manufacturer's certification of safety, while also voiding the NOCSAE standards. Thus, allowing the use of such outer shells, would amount to the District's sanctioning the use of untested and uncertified equipment. The District and its Athletic Department are unwilling to take this chance, and as such will not permit the use of any after-market outer shells for player-assigned football helmets during practices or games.

You can access information about the NOCSAE's safety standards at its website located at www.nocsae.org.