# AoW

Directions: 1. Mark you confusion 2. Annotate your text/Show evidence of a close reading 3. Write a one-page relection on your own sheet of paper.

# Concussions hit home: Football can be hazardous to your health, but so are other contact sports

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**KALAMAZOO, MI** -- When it comes to concussions, no sport is under more scrutiny than football.

There are good reasons for that. Football is not only the most popular high school sport -- [**with participation almost twice as high as track and field**](http://www.mhsaa.com/News/PressReleases/tabid/224/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/1472/2011-12-Athletics-Participation-Drop-Slower-Than-Student-Enrollment-Decline.aspx), the second most-popular competition -- it may be the most violent, with an ethos that encourages players to ignore the beating their bodies endure.

Studies suggest that up to [**50 percent of teens**](http://www.nationalreview.com/right-field/302275/most-football-concussions-dont-happen-nfl-nicholas-frankovich) who play four years of high school football will sustain at least one concussion; they also suggest that, on average, at least [**one concussion occurs almost every high school football game**](http://www.momsteam.com/health-safety/concussion-rates-high-school-sports). By a healthy margin, football is the school sport most likely to [**result in a trip to the hospital emergency room for a traumatic brain injury.**](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6039a1.htm)

The latter is particularly unnerving when one considers that very few girls play football, which means the injuries are concentrated in half of the youth population. [**American teenage boys are almost three times**](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6039a1.htm) as likely to end up with a brain injury compared to teenage girls, and football is a major reason for that.

That's not surprising, considering that football is such a popular sport -- and one that can involve "high-impact trauma," said Dr. Thomas Goodwin, a specialist in sports medicine with Pro-Med Physicians, a Kalamazoo-area practice affiliated with Borgess Health.

Another reason that football is especially worrisome: For all the emphasis on concussions, the bigger worry for athletes may be the cumulative toll of body blows that jolt the head, traumatizing brain tissue and nerves in the process.

While there are frequent collisions in sports such as soccer, basketball and hockey, football is unique in that it is deliberately designed to have participants collide hard as play after play. Young athletes may get a concussion in soccer, but they're not going to experience 1,000 sub-concussive impacts in a season, which can happen in football. Research suggests that in terms of g-force, playing in a football game can be equivalent to being in a 20- to 30-mph car crash.

Still, it's a big mistake to think football presents the only risk to young athletes.

"You see (concussions) in football and hockey, of course, but you also see it in sports like soccer and basketball, which are contact sports where the kids don't have padding. Lacrosse is another one," Goodwin said.

Goodwin said the most serious sports-related concussion he's seen involved a girl injured in a head-to-head collision playing soccer.

"She was a straight-A kid whose grades dropped to Cs and Ds," Goodwin said. "She never really recovered; she was a different kid. It was really sad."

Moreover, a 2011 analysis by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest that some of the most risky activities in terms of concussions are outside of organized sports. The study looked at recreational activities that led to emergency room visits for brain injuries in children. Topping the list: Biking.

Dana Pope of Portage can testify that concussions can occur in a wide range of activities. Both of her two sons have suffered concussions in Little League baseball, one at age 11 and the other at age 10.

"I'm apt to hear parents say they have their kids play baseball or soccer because of the injuries in football," Pope said. "But I tell them, it doesn't matter what sport they play -- they can get injuries."

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Concussions Response Options:

1- Many people think we should ban football until a player is 16 years old based on concussion injuries(and long term effects)...Is this a good or a bad proposal? Why? Justification?

2- Does popularity of a sport allow people to overlook, lie, or not worry about injuries as much (such as football)? Why? Where do you see this as true?

3- Do your own research on your sport of interest(s) and see where it falls with the concussion rate. Should your sport have limitations based on concussions? Why or why not? Online article has graphs for all sports.