Cory Froomkin  
Headline: Concussions: Are Ohio High Schools Using Their Heads?

Twenty-six high schools were contacted across the state of Ohio. The purpose: To receive information about concussions. The computer assisted reporting class at Kent State University submitted public records requests to each one of these schools. Of the 26 contacted, 17 have a concussion policy, seven do not, and two are not sure.

One that does have a policy, Chillicothe High School’s [head injury protocol](#) states if no medical professional is around and the injured athlete is experiencing head injury symptoms, that athlete should be sent to the proper health treatment facility. The school’s [protocol](#) goes on to list some of the symptoms of a head injury such as convulsions, numbness and severe headaches.

One of those reports indicated an athlete was hit at the ear hole and showed signs of a concussion. The report continues, “Taken care of by Uniotos atc, candance. She did concussion eval and activated EMS. Parents met athlete at ER. Treated and released. Will follow up with his PCP on Thursday.”

Chillicothe’s concussion report form requires a parent’s signature and states, “Coach, Please provide to the Parent or Guardian at the time of head injury.”

According to the inquiry log report, between August 1, 2011 and November 1, 2012, 14 concussions were reported at Chillicothe High School. Eleven of these athletes were treated by the team staff, sent to a hospital or referred to the team MD. Three reports did not have an action listed.

Paul Miller, the Athletic Trainer at Gahanna Lincoln High School says, they had seven reported concussions so far this year.

Youngstown’s East High School has been dodging the bullet for almost a decade. East High School’s Athletic Director, Ed Matley, said the school “has not had a concussion injury for nine years in this school district.”

Joseph Congeni, MD, the Director of Sports Medicine at Akron Children’s Hospital says, “I’m always concerned when I hear somebody say, ‘Geez, we haven’t had a concussion in here in a couple of years.’ What’s that telling me when you’re playing a sport like football is maybe there just isn’t somebody there who’s comfortable being able to make that diagnosis.”

Twenty-four high schools, in Ohio, were contacted to see if they track all concussions in games and practices. Seven don’t track concussions.

Zanesville High School Athletic Director Doug Smith says, “We use both an injury software program called Sportware as well as paper forms to track all concussions. The
athlete’s concussion history and overall injury history is tracked and recorded, which is set up by our physician.”

The class asked twenty-five Ohio high schools if they require concussion education training for coaches. Twenty do require the training. Zanesville High School Superintendent Terry Martin says, “All the trainers on the staff have been certified to handle concussions through training and education. All coaches have been required to watch a short training film on how to handle concussions on the field or during events.”

Coaches at Bay Village High School are required to take the “Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know” training course.

Westland High School, in Galloway, has a standard operation procedure for its athletic trainers. If a physician is not available, the athletic trainer will decide if the athlete can return to the sport.

“In very urban settings or very rural settings, for instance, there are not athletic trainers out there, and the athletic trainers make a big difference, a huge difference. They’re the really key player here. They’re there all the time,” Dr. Congeni says.

What about the parents? Struthers High School does give information to the guardians of the athletes on what to look for if their child suffers a head injury. The mother of a Chillicothe High School student who had a concussion was given a head injury sheet before taking the student to the hospital.