Cuyahoga Falls High School’s Athletic Director Tom DiFrancesco reported that the school had 69 athletes in the 2011-12 school year receive a concussion. At least one athlete was reported to have a concussion in all 23 varsity sports the school provides. That’s an average of over one concussion a week.

East High School in Youngstown has reported a far less physical sports program. The school’s Athletic Director reported that the school has not received an athletic concussion in the past 9 years.

Student journalists at Kent State University contacted various high schools in Ohio to evaluate if they were protecting student-athletes from the dangers of concussions, in games but also practice.

Overall, 14 schools said they could track student-athlete concussions in games and practice. Of that, some were unable or unwilling to deliver us that policy. Seven schools said they could not. Three schools were unsure if they are able to track concussions.

When asked whether the school is able to track concussions Coventry High School superintendent Russell Chaboudy said, “I’m not sure. With all the new changes in the laws and everything it’s a situation where we haven’t really had to do that at this point.”

“We have been advised on concussions but I don’t have any meeting minutes or advisory material for you,” Mogadore High School superintendent Christina Dinklocker said. “Like anything else, we just read it, learn it and throw it away.”

Eighteen of 23 schools said training coaches on concussions is required, while five schools said it is not.

Athletic programs are better able to track concussions through the use of testing methods. Two of the schools said they used PUPIL training while four use the imPACT system. PUPIL training is coach based training program, while impact evaluates athletes brain functions pre and post concussions.

While some Ohio high schools said they were not able to track concussions, others are able to track them in detailed fashion.

One such example is Chillicothe High School.
They reported that when an athlete leaves with a head injury and is on the sideline they should be monitored every 5-10 minutes. If appropriate medical care is not available, they say to take an athlete with even mild symptoms should be sent for medical evaluation.

Chillicothe concussion reports are thorough. Coaches filed detailed reports of concussions. One example said, “I did not permit the athlete to drive home.” Another stated a coach told a player’s mother that the student-athlete would be “under close observation today” and that “I also advised her to stay away from heading the ball for a week."

Napolean High School also presented a strong policy on handling concussions. The first sentence in the policy states, “Concussions are serious injuries and must always be treated as such.” The school has a detailed practice policy in which a student-athlete is not allowed back on the field the same day and must be cleared by a trainer before returning. The school also has individual procedures for home and away games. Finally, the policy states to keep a coach or player near the athlete suspected of having a concussion.