

FOOTBALL HELMETS “THE PROPER FITTING PROCEDURE”

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I want to thank Dick Rundle and the WFCFA for allowing me to present a short article for the Summer Clinic Manual. We at Riddell, support high school football in Wisconsin and will continue to do so because of the great support and relationships with the coaches and AD's of this state.

Now, equipment fitting day for many coaches is a day of organized chaos with coaches scrambling to get each kid fitted with protective equipment as fast as they can so they all can get on with the X's and O's of football. Do not overlook this vital day. Each athlete must have a proper fit of their helmet.

A. *The Proper Fitting Procedure:* Helmet fitting takes time. While every school does it somewhat different, it should be done in an atmosphere where the player and the individual responsible for fitting can concentrate on the details of the fit. It should not only be an exercise in safety, but an educational experience also (e.e., read the warning label to them and tell them how important it is for them to tell a coach if their helmet is not fitting properly).

1. All helmets should be laid out according to size. Most of your helmets will be sized M, L, XL and thus should be arranged in three different areas accordingly. Various sized jaw pads should be grouped to accommodate rapid change. Helmet adjustment pads should also be available.
2. The fitting room should be set up so that the player being fit, the person fitting and no more than 2 on-deck players be present at one time. Because of the height of many players fitting is easier and more exact with the player seated on a stool.
3. Urge players to maintain a moderate to short hairstyle during the season. Changes in hair length call for a new evaluation of the fit.
4. Players should dampen their hair to approximate their sweat conditions. Towel off excess water.
5. Each player should be measured with a measuring tape (or caliper) at 1" above eyebrows to determine head size. This will provide the basis for selecting the helmet (M, L, XL) which will fit each player best. (NOTE: If an athlete is between shell sizes, call your Riddell representative and he can provide you with a fitted helmet specifically for that player.)

B. *How The Helmet Should Fit:*

1. The front of the helmet should sit one inch above the eyebrow. This is the point at which you can encompass the largest head mass. When pressing down with the fingers interlocked on top of the helmet, the pressure should be on the crown of the head and not on the brow. This is considered a good crown adjustment and should provide good visibility.
2. The chin strap should be exactly centered and without slack to anchor the helmet properly. The helmet should feel comfortable and snug. The skin of the forehead should move with the sweatband as the helmet moves laterally.
3. The jaw pads should feel firm against the face.
4. The suspension should provide firm contact with the maximum amount of head mass and the posterior rim of the shell should cover the brain stem area.
5. The various components of a good fit must be maintained during play.

FITTING CHECKLIST - For the player

1. Buckle up before the mirror.
2. Apply pressure to the top of your helmet – helmet should sit one inch above the eyebrow.
3. Grab the front sides of the helmet and twist – forehead skin should crimp before the helmet moves.
4. Great contact with jaw pads.
5. Chin strap centered without slack.

See your coach, equipment manager, or trainer if adjustments are necessary.