

★ Guest editorial

Keep monitoring young QB after blow to the head

The quarterback is sacked and his head is slammed to the turf. His coach pulls him aside, and the team trainer asks him a series of questions. The quarterback can answer them, and he says he feels fine.

The coach sends him back out, end of story. He's fine, right? Wrong.

Assessing head injuries in sports has become more involved, and physicians recommend watching impacted players more closely to prevent long-term damage. However, evaluations for injured players are not one-size-fits-all.

"There's no cookbook. As physicians, we would all love a cookbook. So you have x, y, and z and the athletes should be out for a week, and if you have x, y, and z they should be out for a month. But there's no cookbook," said Margot Putukian, director of athletic medicine at Princeton University.

It is important to monitor impacts to the head, because repeated concussions can lead to serious problems.

A child with an underlying disability could perform worse in school after multiple hits to the head, according to Matthew Grady, a pediatrician who specializes in sports medicine at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

And it gets worse. "The concern is that there are injuries such as second impact syndrome," said Putukian. "You can have significant dysregulation in terms of blood flow to the brain that can end in death."

The medical profession used to define concussions as loss of consciousness. Today, physicians classify any impact that shakes the brain as a concussion, and only 10 percent of those cause people to pass out. Further, physicians now know that symptoms of concussions can be delayed.

"The symptoms of concussion are not an all-or-nothing phenomenon. They develop over hours," said Grady.

Putukian recommends that team physicians or coaches trained to assess head injuries continue to monitor players between periods of play. If a player becomes lethargic and less able to answer questions, he or she should be removed from the game.

However, players—as well as their families—may be reluctant to follow such advice.

"People are willing to take significant risks so that they can continue to play," said Jack Jallo, a neurological surgeon wrote a text book on brain injuries.

According to Jallo, brain injuries are far more common among lower socioeconomic groups. In his experience treating head injuries, Jallo has observed that athletic success comprises many players' only dream for the future.

Their dreams need not be dashed—nor their brains, for that matter.

"The best prevention for a head injury is not to have one...it's to protect these children or these athletes from getting hit in the first place and if they get hit, to minimize the impact on the brain," said Jallo.

According to Putukian, athletic teams at the college and high school level have taken measures—such as baseline tests and better quality helmets—to prevent and screen for concussions.

However, not all athletes are protected as well as they could be.

"Below the high school level, all bets are off," said Jallo.

It's up to school coaches to educate themselves on head injuries and to make conservative judgments regarding players' health.

"If you have any doubt about a kid's ability to get back in the game, hold them out," said Jallo.

To learn how you can prevent and check for concussions, download the "Heads Up" toolkit at <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/>.

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Chelsea Toledo is a University of Georgia graduate student studying Health and Medical Journalism, which is the only professional graduate program offered through the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. As a first-year student, she has been assigned Elbert County to research local public health-related issues in rural areas.



Chelsea Toledo

★ My view

★ Your view



Portia Mattox-Noble and Phyllis Odister Cleveland hold a check for book scholarships for Anissa McIntosh at the Annual Spring Luncheon (photo contributed).

'Thank you' for 'fine southern hospitality'

On behalf of The Annual Spring Luncheon, thank you Elbert County for the fine southern hospitality shown to our out-of-town guests.

Our guests shopped in our stores and used our library where they were greeted with smiles and a friendly "hello."

They enjoyed their daily lunches at Richard's Restaurant where they customers asked "where y'all from?"

A special thank you to Dr. Quincy Fortson and the awesome members of the Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church.

Another special thank you to Keith Odister; the son of Mr. O'neal Odister; Ms. Portia Mattox-Noble, Ms. Nikki Noble, Ms. Eleanor Dean-Cornelius, all private sponsors, employees at the Civic Center, *The Elberton Star* and the WSB radio station - gospel hour. Congratulations to Ms. Anissa

M. McIntosh, who was presented the 2011 book scholarship. Anissa is the daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. Sam McIntosh.

The next annual spring luncheon will be held March 17, 2012, at the Elberton Civic Center.

Thank you all and may God continue to richly bless you.

Phyllis Odister-Cleveland

END of APRIL



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★ Your view

'Loved Boxed Up' still needing assistance

'Loved Boxed Up' is still collecting monetary donations at Badcock in Elberton.

We still have a lot of items left over from our Christmas collections, so any monetary donations

collected are very much appreciated due to shipping costs.

Thank you on behalf of the soldiers overseas!

Thanks Candice Armbergery



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