

FLAG/TOUCH FOOTBALL SAFETY BRIEF

LOSSES

Navy losses involving football for FY 88 through 92 include 433 injuries resulting in five or more lost workdays. A total of 9,914 Days were lost from work. Injuries commonly involve the foot, ankle, lower leg, knee and shoulder. The average time lost from work is 23 days.

BACKGROUND

A review of football mishaps shows several factors repeatedly contribute to these accidents. Slippery grass, rocky fields and paved parking lots are hazardous playing areas. Often what starts out as a friendly game of touch accelerated to rough and tumble tackle football. Absence of protective equipment and use of alcohol increase the number and severity of mishaps.

EXAMPLES

The following examples are typical mishap reports submitted to the Safety Center:

- a. An MM3 was playing a pick-up game of tackle football. While tackling an opponent, he ended up under a pile of bodies and suffered a broken leg. He was not wearing a helmet or pads. He lost 23 workdays.
- b. An SN was participating in a flag football tournament. While trying to catch a pass, he collided with a defensive player and fell to the ground with the opponent on top of him. A twisted knee and torn ligaments cost him 18 lost workdays.
- c. OS2 was playing football on the beach. He went into the ocean waist deep, and then he dove for a pass into an oncoming wave. His head struck a submerged rock. He

received a fractured vertebrae. He lost 75 days from work.

d. ACAN was playing touch football with friends. The ball was tossed to him and the defensive player tackled him. He sustained a strained knee. He lost 75 days from work.

e. OS2 was blocking an opponent on the line. A second opponent came from behind and clipped him at the knees. He fell to the ground on his forearm. He lost 32 days from work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are as follows:

- a. Wear only good quality footwear or shoes with rubber cleats.
- b. Don't wear rings and heavy jewelry.
- c. Wear a mouth guard.
- d. Don't drink alcohol prior to or during a game.
- e. Inspect the field for safe playing conditions.
- f. Warm-up 10 to 15 minutes before play starts.
- g. Know the rules of the game and play by them.
- h. Don't block above the shoulders or below the waist.
- i. Don't try to recover a fumbled football. A fumble belongs to the team, which had last possession. Either team cannot advance it.
- j. Spectators should stay away from sidelines unless fencing material is at least eight feet high. Some people have been seriously injured when struck by overthrown balls while seated in this area.

- k. Don't tolerate unnecessary horseplay and un-sport manlike conduct.

SOURCES:

Amateur softball Association of America
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