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Smart Move to Increase Concussion Testing

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Written by [kylestack](#) on 8/13/2011 12:21 AM

Concussion awareness among sports players and fans is unmistakably at an all-time high. I find it difficult to watch a tackle in football or a check in hockey – even a header in soccer – without thinking of the potential effect of the brain rattling inside the skull after each hit. Dick's Sporting Goods is capitalizing on the U.S.'s newfound awareness with a charitable concussion testing program that I hope is embraced by more sports-related organizations.

The program is called PACE (Protecting Athletes through Concussion Education). It began August 2nd, and it utilizes a 20-minute concussion test titled ImPACT (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing). The test is taken by athletes during the pre-season to develop a baseline set of data on brain activity. Once a player is suspected of having sustained a concussion in a practice or a game, he or she re-takes ImPACT to measure current data against the baseline information. The test is credible enough that virtually every major U.S. sports league uses it, including the NFL, MLB and NHL.

Dick's wants over 3,300 elementary schools and high schools to have access to the test, so that up to one million athletes are properly screened for a concussion. Schools new to ImPACT's testing receive its \$500 software free for one year. (Each test package provides baseline tests for up to 300 athletes.)

This is a wonderful idea. At a time when school budgets are limited because of the U.S. economic struggles, independently-funded projects like PACE are necessary. I doubt most schools that will have access to PACE would have found room in their budgets if this program was unavailable.

Kids need to understand at an early age the hazards their chosen sport can impose on the body. Perhaps they'll be more responsible for their actions – realizing that hitting a player as hard as possible in football, hockey or another sport might not be worth it. However the kids interpret it, more education and exposure to concussion testing will increase their chances of making a wise decision while playing their preferred sport.

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8/13/2011 10:58 PM

Although I'm excited at the progress that has been made in concussion awareness, and I have taken ImPACT myself (as a part of my training), I think all sports medicine physicians & neuropsychologists are concerned that the public may rely TOO heavily on these computerized grades. But kudos to dick's, and now only if we could make concussion training mandatory for coaches!

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[bamacy1524](#)

8/13/2011 1:46 PM

My son took an imPACT this morning for football! Great stuff!

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