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NFL CBA Brings Health Benefits

[Edit](#), [Remove](#)Written by [kylestack](#) on 8/10/2011 8:22 AM

The new NFL Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) that ended the league's recent lockout does more than just redistribute the billions of dollars of revenue the league generates annually – it affects players' health. After reviewing details of the CBA through a summary handed out by the NFL Players Association, what struck me most was the increased care taken to protecting players from injury.

For starters, two-a-day practices in training camp are eliminated. Additionally, players can spend a maximum of 4.5 hours per day on the field during training camp. That latter detail might not seem like a big deal; it's progressive because there hadn't been a cap on field time per day before this CBA agreement. Setting rules, such as abolishing two-a-days, keeps coaches from working players too hard.

Now, you might think that a professional football player should be physically fit enough that he can be worked into the ground. That mentality is what contributed to Korey Stringer's death. The ex-Minnesota Viking offensive lineman died from heatstroke during Vikings training camp in 2001, a time when teams didn't even have designated water breaks. (Those became mandatory following Stringer's death.)

Another promising health measure written into the new NFL CBA is that off-season organized team activities, also known as OTAs, are reduced from 14 to 10. This is critical because it was thought that players were getting burned out by overtraining during these team-wide activities.

While it's expected that players should enter training camp in-shape, their teams shouldn't be requiring them to train as much as they did; players' bodies are taxed enough from training camp through the regular season and playoffs.

Teams also can have just 14 padded practices during the regular season, including three in the regular season's final six weeks. That also hadn't been previously regulated.

Critics will likely state that less hitting in training camp and the regular season could actually hinder players. They won't be as prepared to hit and take a hit, they could say. That's a very good point to make, but what's obvious is that NFL player injuries, particularly hits to the head, are more detrimental to their health than previously thought. And in that case, changes must be made. The latest NFL CBA accomplishes that by reducing contact and training demands.