

August 26, 2013

To: OHSAA Member Football Schools and Varsity Head Football Coaches
From: Beau Rugg, OHSAA Assistant Commissioner
Subject: Helmet Policies

I wanted to clarify the NFHS and OHSAA's position as it relates to helmet add-ons such as those products from ProCap, Shockstrip and Guardian Cap. You have a link below that is the NOCSAE statement from August 8, 2013 that further clarifies their position.

The NFHS does not perform scientific tests on any specific items of equipment to determine if the equipment poses undue risks to the student-athletes, coaches, officials or spectators. Such determinations are the responsibility of equipment manufacturers, and we rely heavily on products meeting NOCSAE standards.

NFHS Football Rule 1-5-1a states, in part, that "A helmet and facemask which met the NOCSAE test standard at the time of manufacture..." is required. A consideration in determining whether add-on helmet attachments are legal is that our rule specifies only that the helmet had to meet the NOCSAE test standard at the time of manufacture; helmet add-ons typically are added after the time of helmet manufacture.

The NOCSAE Statement gives manufacturers of add-on attachments (in the fourth bullet) the option to have helmets tested with the helmet add-on attached; however, this would presumably require such manufacturers to test every make and model of helmet with their add-on attached.

The third bullet of the NOCSAE Statement gives the right to helmet manufacturers to determine, under the NOCSAE standards, whether given helmet add-on items would render the certification void. While that may occur, we have no information that it has happened yet.

In the interim, absent decisions by the helmet manufacturers, under the NOCSAE standards, to declare their certifications void pursuant to the third bullet point, or absent further revisions of the pertinent NOCSAE Statement, or absent an NFHS football rules change, our (the NFHS and OHSAA) position about the permissive use of such helmet add-ons remains unchanged from last August. **That position is that the decision as to whether to use or not use helmet attachments remains, at the high school level and all other levels, within the discretion of the various teams, coaches, athletes and parents.**

The OHSAA in no way endorses such products and advises schools to consult with their helmet manufacturers in regards to liability.