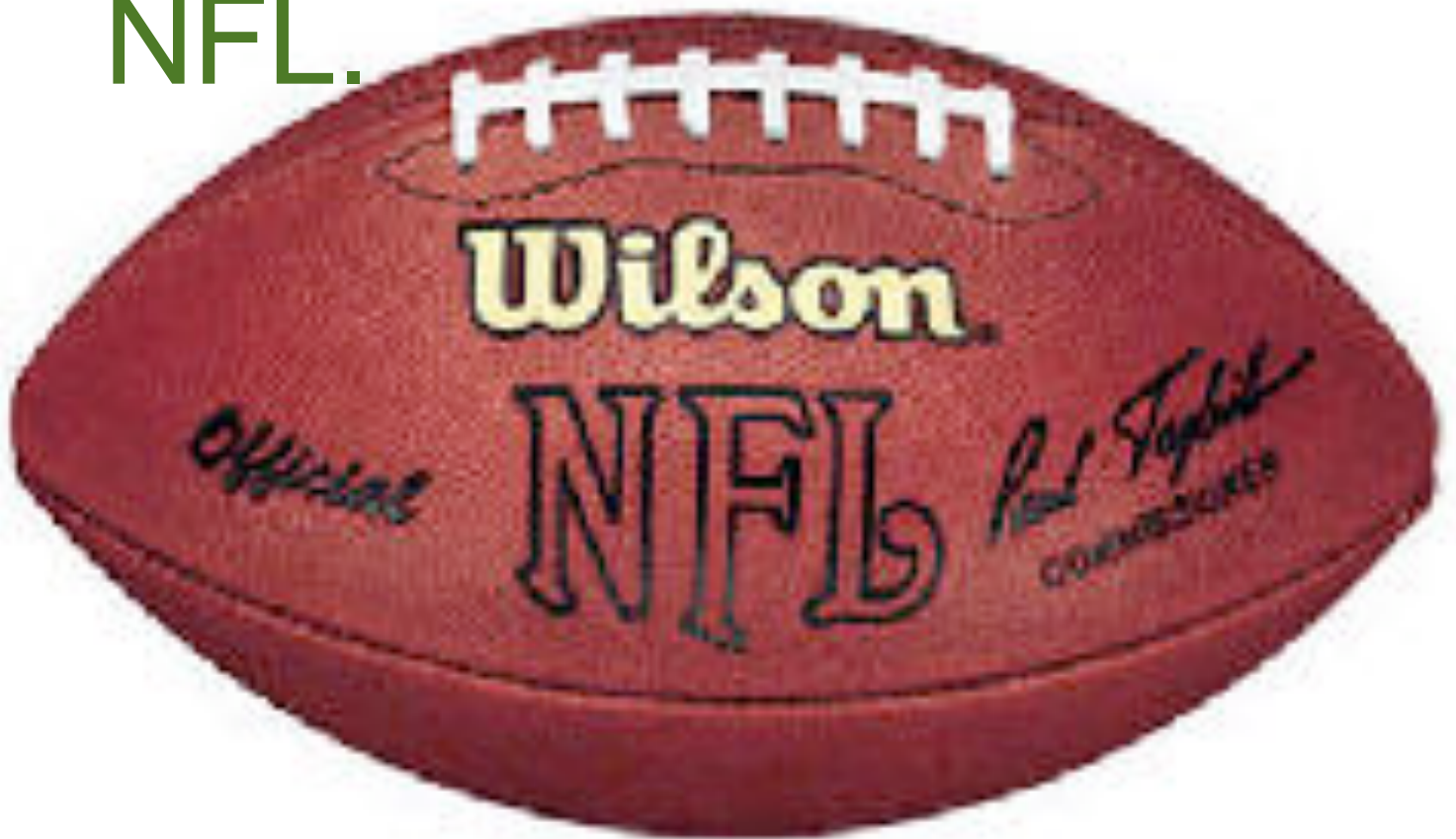


How Football Has Changed for Player Safety, and added football gear in the NFL.



By: Owen Higgs



Above is a 19th century American football team.

To the right is a current time football team (the New Orleans Saints).



this is a rugby team.





American football was created based on the game of rugby. If you look at the two sports being played, you will see some similarities between the two sports. The balls look similar, each of the sports use tackling to stop the opponent from scoring.

Some people may think that football pads are mostly for hitting harder. Let me tell you something: They're not! Football pads are for players' safety, and they are very effective in keeping players safe. But pads haven't always protected players as well as they do now.

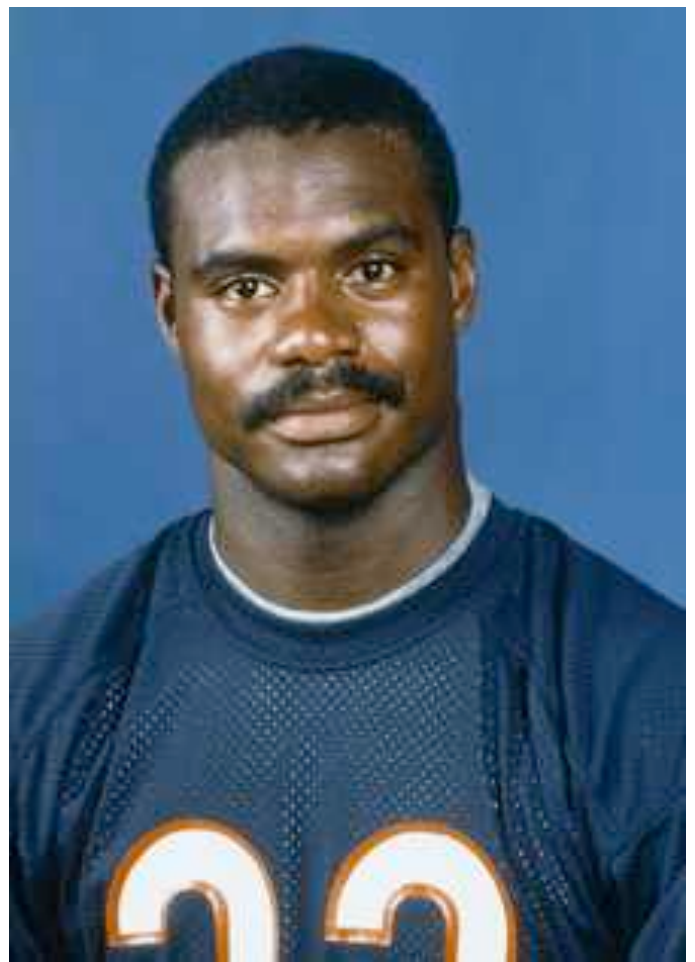
Football padding dates back to the late 19th century, but they were not really pads, they were just old clothing tucked under the players' shirts. Since then, padding has gotten a lot better, made of durable plastic with cushioning, shaped to fit the human body, so it is

comfortable. And it will keep on improving because the research on how to help prevent injuries is getting more advanced.

Padding isn't the only thing that has changed or been added for player safety. The rules have changed, too. The rule that may have the largest impact on player safety was established only last year. The National Football League (NFL) said that there could no longer be intentional head-to-head tackles. If a player did make one, they would get fined. This rule has led to feuds. Some players, like the Pittsburgh Steelers' James Harrison, think that the NFL is only picking on them, and not fining other people as much for an even harder hit.

But for player safety to improve, the NFL is going to have to make some unpopular decisions.

To the right is Dave Duerson.



To the left is an old football helmet, the gave very little protection to players heads.



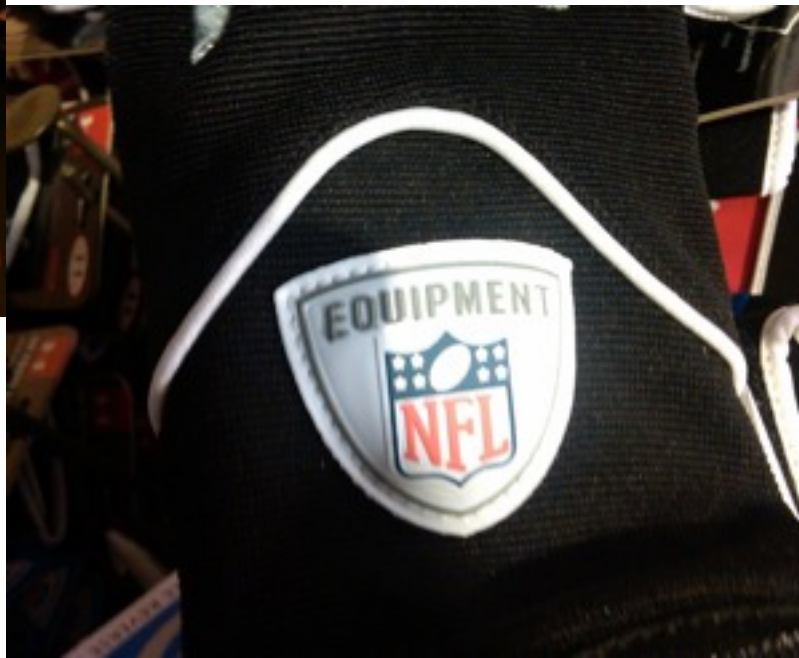
Helmets used to only be leather caps, with nothing to protect the player's face. Helmets used now in the NFL are plastic with much more padding in them. Also, they have face masks and chin straps that keep the helmet from falling off. Helmets were improved for player safety, not so you could hit harder with your head (not that every player sees it that way). This is important because if players get one concussion, it increases the chances of getting another one. If they kept getting concussion they could permanently damage their brain.

Football caused one player, Dave Duerson of the Chicago Bears to commit suicide because of the brain trauma he suffered from head injuries.



This is a picture of the American football player George Halas in uniform (without helmet on) for football.

As you can see on the right, the old NFL uniforms look kind of thin. That is because there is much less padding than modern day uniforms.



Above are two pictures of some football gloves, these gloves enhance your catching abilities. The gloves are partially made out of rubbery fabric on the front of them, that helps you catch the ball better because the hands will have better traction. Football players didn't have these gloves in the 19th century.



Above are various pads made of flexible plastic used to protect knees, shoulders and other body parts. Pads like this didn't exist in the nineteenth century, and because of that, many football players got injured.