

## From the Sidelines



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### Football's future: 2nd down and long

**L**IKE MANY OF YOU and probably a few hundred thousand other Americans, I am anxiously awaiting the beginning of football season. Punt returns for TDs, goal line stands, trick plays, perfectly timed long passes—it sure seems a long time since the Super Bowl. I miss America's 21st century pastime, from Friday night lights through Monday Night, September through January.

But to fill the time between training camps and tailgate parties, there is always off-season news. This year the focus is on bounties, injuries and concussions. (Where's that clown Terrell Owens when you need him to make news?) Coaches and players are suspended for putting money on the table to knock guys out of the game—did I miss something or isn't that what pro football's all about? Anyone believe only one team in the league was doing this? Sheesh.

And former players are suing the league because they now have physical problems, as if they had been forced to have the snot knocked out of them, over and over. Mike Golic, the dumb half of the "Mike and Mike" radio show on ESPN, says knowing what he knows now about concussions, etc., he'd still have played in the NFL as long as he could. He says that's what football players do, which is great but now they want it both ways—"you paid us to knock each other senseless and now we want you to pay us because we knocked each other senseless."

This lawsuit is akin to the lung cancer patient suing a cigarette company; why blame someone? You made a personal decision and you deal with the consequences. There's information available on football injuries; this isn't 1955. The video of former NFL center Jim Otto's taking 20 minutes just to get out of bed in the morning has been around for a long time.

The violent hits in football are producing more serious injuries due to the ever-increasing size and speed of the players at the professional level. All the light now being shed on how repeated blows to the head can affect players' health as they age is opening up eyes at lower levels. A teacher and school board member in suburban Philadelphia recently called for her district to ban football. "It's no longer appropriate for public institutions to fund gladiators. I am very concerned about putting these student-athletes in the position of getting a concussion," she said. "Football has gotten faster, harder and more dangerous with each passing year. I'm extremely scared we will eventually be sued over injuries suffered in sports."

I doubt any school districts are going to stop playing football—yet. Lots of small town Americans probably gather together these days for only one thing, the local high school's Friday night football game. But the lawyers are circling. All of us who love football need to encourage those in power to find ways to improve the safety of the game before it's too late.

#### Correction from June issue

All products listed for ArmorTech ([www.utaarmortech.com](http://www.utaarmortech.com)) in the Chemical Resource Guide in our June issue are in fact products of SipcamAdvan ([www.sipcamadvan.com](http://www.sipcamadvan.com)). We regret the error.

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