

Dear Coach,

Having lost a son to the rigors of football we have made it a passion to save other families from our pain. Patrick died from CTE, Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy. This slow growing disease is caused by repetitive hits to the head, not necessarily concussions. A study from the Mayo clinic suggests that 33% of amateur collision sport players may develop CTE. The time is now to protect our kids. Limiting brain impacts will be a thing of the future. We have learned the brain is much more fragile than we ever imagined. We are asking you to be ahead of the curve for the sake of your kids by limiting contact in football practices. The concept is to practice like the pros. In high school football, 60% to 75% of head trauma occurs in practice, not games. In the NFL, that number is 3%.

Research shows that limiting the amount of full-contact tackling during high school football practices can have a big impact on reducing the number of concussions among players. This is probably also true for other football injuries such as sprains, fractures, and dislocations. Teaching coaches on how to effectively reduce contact in practice will not only save lives, but could also save the game of football. The number of participants in tackle football is dwindling over the concern of safety. The game is changing and we need to be on the forefront changing the culture of hitting to harm to hitting for purpose.

The examples the pros and Ivy League schools use are a better model for high school programs. Being healthy and fresh on game day outweighs banged up players and may keep the game alive and families intact. During practice in the NFL you are in shorts and shells and you are tapping people and letting them run by. Very few people ever touch the ground. Dartmouth players get 500-800 reps of controlled tackling throughout the season which is much more than any other full-contact practice could accomplish. (By the way Dartmouth finished in the top 6 in defense among 125 FCS college teams) The advice is to learn tackling techniques with minimal contact and then use those techniques in full-contact games for the rest of their careers with less wear and tear and overall exposure to concussion risk. The winningest college coach in history, John Gagliardi from St. John's in Minnesota, runs very limited-contact practices similar to touch football. He says the biggest drawback to coaching football is seeing people hurt. We hope you agree.

Please see the below message from our friend at Practice Like Pros and please consider a coaching clinic to save lives and families.

All the best, Karen Zegel  
Patrick Risha CTE Awareness Foundation  
[StopCTE.org](http://StopCTE.org)  
[215-348-8308](tel:215-348-8308)

This is Terry O'Neil of Weston, Ct. I'm a former network television producer, former senior vice president of the New Orleans Saints. For the past three years, I've been operating **Practice Like Pros**, a national movement to reduce needless injury in high school football, endorsed by **Mike Ditka, Archie Manning, Warren Moon, Anthony Munoz, Tony Dorsett, Dr. Robert Cantu, Dr. James Andrews**, among others.....see full list at [www.practicelikepros.com](http://www.practicelikepros.com).

Our **Practice Like Pros** clinic tours the country, showing high school coaches on video how NFL and college teams practice with minimal contact. To date, we've made 35 appearances in 20 states and the District of Columbia. Please contact us to host a clinic in your area.

Regards,  
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**Practice Like Pros**  
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