

Passion or Safety?

John Doe died at age 17 playing football at his public high school in Illinois. Ever since John was young, he spent most of his time outside, playing football. He started team football in third grade and stuck with the sport ever since. Throughout his football career, John suffered a few minor injuries from playing. From a few sprains to a mild concussion, John was always quick to spring back to immediately get back on the field. John's parents always worried about football as it has many risks of serious injury. But despite their worries about the inherent risks in football, they allowed him to pursue playing football, witnessing his determination and commitment to the sport.

John was in his senior year of high school and in the process of committing to play for a scholarship in college. However, John's parents' nightmare became a reality on the night of October 14th. It was the biggest game of the season as John's team was playing their rival school. John and his football team had won against their rival the past two years and was adamant on keeping their winning streak. The game started and the crowd roared. The Players on the field were pumped with adrenaline as they tackled each other to the ground. It was five minutes before half time when John received a pass from his teammate where he was blindsided by a defender running toward him at full speed. The sound of their bodies colliding echoed across the field and bleachers as silence filled the stadium. John crumpled to the ground and did not get up. He had suffered from an aneurysm and died that night.

John's parents were devastated and for the rest of their lives wondered if they should have let their only son play football, a sport he had loved so much. While his parents believed they had made the right decision, they experienced lingering doubts. If they had stopped John from playing football, he would still be in their lives. But if they had stopped him, he would have been miserable not being able to do what he was ever so passionate about. As they shared their story to the world, it raised the question of whether football should be played at public high schools.

Football is a widely known sport all across the United States. Public schools throughout the country have football teams, despite the alarming rates of injuries every year. Despite the sport's popularity, the statistics prompt some to argue for its ban in public schools, which would save the lives of many adolescents. On the other hand, people argue that there is no reason for football to be banned in public schools as parents and students are aware of the potential risks.

Study Questions:

1. Should football continue to be played in public high schools, given the potential consequences for the players and the profound impact on their families? 2. Is it ethical for schools and parents to prioritize the potential risks involved in football over students' passion for a sport?

3. Should there be mandatory educational programs for parents and students about the potential risks of football, allowing individuals to make more informed decisions about participation?
4. Where does the responsibility for life changing or fatal injuries lie: is it in the hands of the teen (who might be old enough to make the choice to play) or the parents or the school — or some other entity?