

## **Alabama hopes to prevent brain injuries with new concussion law**

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

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Last year, more than 150 Alabama high school football players reported suffering concussions during games or practice. Many suspect that as many as twice that number actually suffered these injuries. As many people now know, these concussions can cause serious and sometimes permanent brain injuries for these young students.

In an effort to protect all those who play sports in Alabama from receiving brain injuries, new Alabama legislation requires that every sports organization must train their coaches to identify concussions. In addition, the new law imposes a requirement to distribute information to parents about head injuries and concussions. These requirements apply to all sports at all levels. In enacting this legislation, Alabama becomes the 21<sup>st</sup> state with a concussion law.

The new legislation follows a concussion policy instituted by the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) last year. In its pioneer effort to reduce the number of brain injuries suffered by all high school athletes in Alabama, the association banned any player who suffered a head injury from returning to play a sport until a doctor gave the okay. All Alabama high school coaches must also be able to identify the signs and symptoms of a concussion under the new policy.

The enactment of this new legislation, in conjunction with the concussion policy instituted by the AHSAA, demonstrates that the safety of all Alabama athletes has become more important than winning.

This legislation will help protect athletes in all sports by raising awareness so that parents and coaches are more likely to identify symptoms and seek medical treatment for brain injuries. The failure by Alabama sports associations or coaches to follow the new rules will put their athletes at risk of serious personal injuries.

**Source:** al.com, "Concussion legislation a good start," Jeff Roper, 6 July 2011