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State Media Release

State CIF Office, 4658 Duckhorn Drive, Sacramento, CA 95834
Phone: 916-239-4477 Fax: 916-239-4478

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Quwan Spears, Sports Information Officer

qspears@cifstate.org

As High School Student-Athletes Begin Fall Play - Health and Safety Remain Most Important

Professional athletes, students, coaches and parents discuss importance of safety awareness

SACRAMENTO—As high school student-athletes begin fall play statewide, the California Interscholastic Federation is drawing attention to the health risks associated with concussions, heat stroke and dehydration. As a result, the CIF is launching an ongoing “Play It Safer” campaign by distributing a “Ten Tips” card to help parents easily identify potential life threatening injuries. The card also suggests precautionary measures that can prevent thousands of injuries.

Additionally, the CIF will host two town hall meetings---one in Southern California and another in Northern California to educate parents statewide. Professional athletes, students, coaches and teachers will be on site to present the “Ten Tips” and answer questions.

“Each year, somewhere between 1.6 and 3.8 million sports and recreation related concussions occur in the United States,” said Marie M. Ishida, CIF State Executive Director. “Concussions can have serious, long-term health effects with a variety of symptoms such as headaches, nausea, fatigue, confusion, memory problems and more. We need to raise awareness around the seriousness of what are often dismissed as minor injuries, which is why we hope the Ten Tips card and upcoming town hall meetings will be helpful and informative to our athletes and their families.”

A high school student-athlete who sustains a concussion is three times more likely to sustain another. Moreover, he or she may lack the proper diagnosis and management of a concussion, which can result in more serious long-term consequences, or risk of coma and death. These effects are cumulative in athletes who return to play prior to complete recovery.

“We want to make sure that if someone suspects their child has a concussion, they know to seek medical attention right away,” stated Dr. Tony Strickland of the Sports Concussion Institute in Los Angeles and a partner in the CIF Town Hall meetings. “It’s equally important to make sure the athlete is fully recovered before he or she returns to play and experiences another serious consequence.”

September is often the hottest time of the year in some California regions. That is why it is not only important to be aware of the negative effects and risks associated with concussions, but also with those attached to heat related illnesses.

“Student-athletes need to know that they should arrive at practice well hydrated- which means that parents and guardians need to make sure that their children are drinking plenty of water and fluids before practice,” according to Dr. Keith Feder of the West Coast Sports Medicine Foundation which serves 35 high schools in southern California. “Drinking plenty of fluids should occur at practice- every ten to fifteen minutes, and also at home before and after practice. What may seem like just dizziness, drowsiness or a rapid heart beat could actually be serious heat illness and needs to be addressed by a medical professional immediately.”

Attached is a complete list of the CIF’s Ten Tips along with information about the town hall meetings designed to educate and inform parents and students.

Town Hall Information:

- Who:** **Rod Martin**, *12yr. NFL Linebacker w/Raiders. 2 time Pro-Bowl (Southern California Town Hall)*
Mike Lamb, *KHTK radio 1140, former scholarship athlete at USC, Dean’s List and All Pac-Ten Honor Roll (Northern California Town Hall)*
Dr. Tony Strickland, *Sports Concussion Institute*
Dr. Keith Feder, *West Coast Sports Medicine*
Marie Ishida, *Executive Director, State CIF*
- What:** Community and Parent Presentation to Discuss Health and Safety Risks Associated with Back-to-School Fall Sports
- When/Where:** Southern California- Tuesday, September 8th, 7:00 pm
Los Alamitos High School – Performing Arts Center
3591 Cerritos Ave.
Los Alamitos, CA 90720
- Northern California- Wednesday, September 9th, 7:00pm
Inderkum High School – Performing Arts Center
2500 New Market Drive
Sacramento, CA 95835
- Why:** As students and families enter the 2009-2010 school year, CIF recognizes the importance of educating team members and their parents about the health and safety risks associated with fall sports. Information about the signs of, and how to prevent, concussions, heat stroke and other dangerous sports related illnesses will be discussed amongst students, teachers, coaches and professional athletes.

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