



Alabama Attorney Says Safety Is A Concern For High School Football Players, Cheerleaders

Birmingham personal injury attorney Keith T. Belt Jr. urges high schools to take steps to ensure the safety of their football players and cheerleaders as a new season starts.

Birmingham, AL ([PRWEB](#)) September 10, 2010 -- As another exciting high school football season starts in the state of Alabama, Birmingham [personal injury attorney](#) Keith T. Belt Jr. says schools should take steps to ensure the safety of their football players and cheerleaders.

“Statistics show that high school athletes suffer more catastrophic sports injuries in football and cheerleading than any other sports, and in many cases, these injuries could have been prevented by taking proper safety precautions,” says Belt, the founding member of the Birmingham-based Belt Law Firm, P.C., which represents [personal injury](#) victims throughout Alabama.

“High school football season should be a fun and enjoyable time for everyone involved,” Belt says. “It is critical that coaches, trainers and other school officials get proper training and instruction concerning how to both prevent and recognize serious injuries.”

“If an athlete has suffered an injury, especially a head or neck injury, no coach or school should allow them to return until all signs and symptoms have been resolved, and the athlete’s participation has been cleared by a physician,” Belt says.

Belt added that “this medical evaluation should be standard protocol with coaches because a player who is allowed to continue playing football or other sport after suffering these types of injuries can suffer permanent harm.”

Belt points to the latest survey from the University of North Carolina-based Sports Injury Research Center (SIRC), showing that of the 43 direct catastrophic injuries associated with high school fall sports in 2008, all were associated with football.

Catastrophic injuries include severe concussions, traumatic brain injuries, fractured skulls, broken necks and spinal cord injuries.

According to the SIRC, there were also seven indirect fatalities at the high school football level in 2008, including heart and heat-stroke related deaths.

“Efforts should be made to educate coaches and trainers concerning the proper procedures and precautions to follow when practicing in the heat of late summer and early fall,” Belt says.

While football injuries garner much attention, Belt says that cheerleading risks should not be overlooked. The SIRC reports that 73 catastrophic cheerleading injuries have occurred in the last 26 years, while the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that 30,000 cheerleaders are treated in emergency rooms each year.

“Cheerleaders today perform flips and acrobatic stunts that can be extremely demanding and dangerous,” Belt says.



In Belt's view, preventive measures can be followed in both sports, such as:

- Not allowing any athlete to participate in football or cheerleading without a physical examination and identification of prior head or neck injuries;
- Providing proper safety equipment for all participants, such as proper-fitting helmets for football and floor mats for cheerleading; and
- Making sure all participants receive adequate conditioning and instruction on proper techniques.
- Ensuring all coaches and their staffs are capable of recognizing injuries or heat related symptoms and can get the player to an appropriate healthcare provider.

Even the best preventive measures may not stop a sport-related injury from occurring. When that happens, coaches and staff should have an emergency plan and proper emergency response equipment in place, Belt says.

About Belt Law Firm, P.C.

Belt Law Firm, P.C., is a [personal injury law firm](#) that represents the victims of negligent or wrongful conduct throughout Alabama, including the communities of Birmingham, Bessemer, Cullman, Tuscaloosa, Jasper, Homewood, Jefferson County, Shelby County, Walker County, Blount County and Saint Clair County. Although the firm's focus is on regional litigation in Alabama, the firm's attorneys have also represented clients in Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado and Delaware. To learn more, call the firm toll-free at 1-888-933-1514 or use its [online form](#).

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Contact Information

Keith T. Belt Jr.

Belt Law Firm, P.C.

<http://www.beltlawfirm.com/default.asp>

205.933.1500

Mike Dayton

Consultwebs.com

<http://www.consultwebs.com>

919.88.1748

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