



## WHAT EXACTLY IS A GUARDIAN CAP?

A soft-shell pad, weighing less than 1/2 a pound, worn over a helmet that helps absorb impact and reduce the force of hits during contact.

## WHY DID THE LEAGUE CHOOSE TO PROVIDE GUARDIAN CAPS?

To reduce the severity of head impacts, align with NFL and collegiate safety trends, and stay competitive with other youth tackle leagues.

## WERE PARENTS INVOLVED IN THE DECISION?

Yes. Parents brought the idea of Guardian Caps to the board. We held 2 open meetings where parents could ask questions and share input. We also polled head coaches—3 out of 4 supported adding Guardian Caps as a safety upgrade.

## ARE GUARDIAN CAPS REQUIRED?

No. Guardian Caps are highly recommended, but they are not mandatory. We highly encourage their use to add a layer of protection and to ensure a uniform look for our teams.

## DO PARENTS HAVE TO PAY FOR THEM?

Nope! Guardian Caps are a league-provided safety upgrade—there is no additional cost to families.

## DO GUARDIAN CAPS PREVENT CONCUSSIONS?

No equipment can guarantee concussion prevention. However, studies show Guardian Caps can reduce impact forces by up to 33% in youth athletes and were linked to a 52% drop in preseason concussions in the NFL. They may also reduce the long-term effects of repeated head contact.

## DOES THIS MEAN WE NO LONGER NEED NEW HELMETS?

Not at all. Helmets must still be replaced every 10 years. Our oldest helmets are currently 7 years old, and we're planning to purchase new helmets for the 2026 season. Stay tuned for fundraising opportunities!



## DO GUARDIAN CAPS FIT ALL HELMETS?

Yes! They're designed to fit all major helmet models and sizes.

## CAN GUARDIAN CAPS CAUSE INJURIES?

One expert, Dr. Kevin Guskiewicz, has raised theoretical concerns that added friction could increase neck strain in rare scenarios. However, there have been zero injuries reported across youth, high school, college, or professional football linked to Guardian Cap use or these concerns.

## DO GUARDIAN CAPS VOID HELMET CERTIFICATION OR WARRANTY?

No. Adding a Guardian Cap does not void helmet certification or warranty. According to NOCSAE and federal law, manufacturers cannot decertify a helmet once it's sold unless it's permanently altered and resold—which is not the case here. Guardian Caps are removable, non-invasive, and approved by major helmet brands like VICIS, Schutt, and LIGHT.

## DOES MY CHILD'S SIZE AFFECT HOW WELL THE GUARDIAN CAP WORKS?

No. Guardian Caps are lightweight (under half a pound) and safely used by youth players nationwide. They work effectively across all helmet sizes without adding strain—even for smaller athletes.

## DO GUARDIAN CAPS GIVE ATHLETES A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY?

There's no evidence that athletes play more recklessly while wearing Guardian Caps. Just like with any helmet or safety gear, coaches are responsible for teaching and reinforcing proper technique. Guardian Caps are an extra layer of protection, not a replacement for fundamentals—and when used correctly, they support safer play, not riskier behavior.



## WHO ELSE USES GUARDIAN CAPS?

- 32 NFL Teams
- Over 500 College Teams
- 5,000+ High School Teams
- 1,000+ Youth Tackle Teams

### MANCHESTER EAST COBRAS

- Optional
- Parent provided
- Not currently in the budget to provide them

### HUDSON/LITCHFIELD BEARS

- Optional
- Parent provided
- Will continue to be a discussion for the board

### KEENE KNIGHTS

- Optional
- Parent Provided
- Considering purchasing caps for next season

### PELHAM RAZORBACKS

- Mandated last year as part of required equipment
- Purchased by the league

### SALEM RAMS

- Mandated last year as part of required equipment
- Original purchase was supported and reimbursed by the Firefighters Association



**FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR 2025 Q&A NIGHT THURSDAY,  
JUNE 26<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:30-8PM AT LONDONDERRY HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM 221**



### **PEER-REVIEWED STUDIES & ACADEMIC RESEARCH**

- Verbanas, P. (2020). Prevention of head impacts in youth football: An evaluation of Guardian Cap use in middle school athletes [White paper]. Rutgers University.
- Hoshizaki, T. B., & Brien, S. E. (2024). Evaluation of the effectiveness of a soft-shell helmet cover on head impact in American football. *Annals of Biomedical Engineering*, 52(4), 721–731.
- Hammer, E., Walczak, T. S., McGuine, T. A., & Brooks, M. A. (2023). Protective headgear, head impact biomechanics, and concussion risk in high school football. *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*, 51(6), 1524–1532.
- Alsalaheen, B. A., Mannix, R. C., & Howell, D. R. (2023). Headgear use and concussion injury in contact sports: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 59(4), 257–264.
- Rowson, S., Tyson, A. M., & Cecchi, N. J. (2023). A comparison of head impact biomechanics in high school football athletes during helmet-only and shell practices. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 5, 10650906.
- Cecchi, N. J., Tyson, A. M., & Rowson, S. (2023). Effect of external soft shell helmet covers on head impact biomechanics in American football. *Annals of Biomedical Engineering*, 51(12), 2715–2728.

### **INDEPENDENT TESTING & HELMET LABS**

- Virginia Tech Helmet Lab. (n.d.). Helmet ratings – STAR evaluation system. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. <https://www.helmet.beam.vt.edu>

### **EXPERT COMMENTARY**

- Guskiewicz, K. M. (2022). Public statements on Guardian Cap efficacy and rotational force concerns [Expert commentary]. Referenced in multiple media reports and UNC/Stanford pilot helmet studies.

### **LEAGUE & INDUSTRY REPORTS**

- National Football League (NFL). (2022). NFL reports on Guardian Cap use and concussion reduction during preseason. Retrieved from <https://www.nfl.com/news>

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