

# Stroudsburg invests in football safety

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Helmet sensors alert trainers to possible head injuries

STROUDSBURG — When it comes to safety in football, Stroudsburg took a huge leap this summer.

The school purchased 20 new Riddell helmets that have been equipped with the InSite Impact Response System — a device with five sensors — that sends an alert from the helmet to a monitor (about the size of a cell phone) that a member of coaching staff or a trainer would possess. The alert does not mean a player has suffered a concussion, but that the player had an impact that could result in a head injury.

Athletics Director Tim Honeywell said the cost of the software is \$150 per helmet. The team purchased 10 fewer helmets in 2014 to help offset the cost. The hardware was placed in 20 helmets during a break between practices on Wednesday. The cost of the helmet is \$344, Honeywell said.

"Safety is paramount," Honeywell said. "If there is something out there that can prevent our kids from sustaining a major concussion or major injury, and we can prevent it for this, it's money well spent."

Sideline Response System was developed in 2003, but Stroudsburg is the first team in Monroe County to use it. If a player receives an impact to the head, it triggers a sensor that determines the magnitude of the

impact.

If the impact is above a particular threshold, the battery-powered unit will transmit a signal to those on the sideline. Athletic trainer Matt Shelton said the technology is just “another tool to my toolbox.”

“It’s fantastic,” Shelton said of the five-sensor system. “The more tools you have the better off in the way you do your job. So, it’s nice. It’ll add another set of eyes for me. If I’m dealing with another injury on the sideline, I can check the handheld device and see who got hit.”

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The signal tells the coaches who was impacted and how hard they were impacted. Shelton stressed that an impact on one person may not affect another person the same way.

It’s been documented that athletes who have suffered a concussion are more prone to future concussions. Shelton said he may have five football athletes suffer concussions on an average year, but sometimes no concussions are documented.

“Everybody’s chemistry and the way they take a hit is different,” Shelton said.

The software is placed in the padding of the helmet. It can be removed and placed in another helmet as needed.

Coach Jim Miller said he’s seen players take hits and not know if that player was OK to continue. Now a coaching staff and a trainer can get instant feedback on if they need to pull a player after an impact. The

system has the capability to program thresholds by position (quarterback, running back, offensive line, defensive back, linebacker, defensive line, special teams and wide receiver.)

There is also a level of play — youth, high school, college, professional — and the software is designed to last up to four years.

“Anything we can do to keep these kids safer with their heads, the better off we’ll be,” Miller said.

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