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# Give me Guardian Caps

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Rep. Joseph McNamara (Warwick, Cranston) said in a press release that he intends on introducing legislation that would require Rhode Island high school football players to wear Guardian Caps. This is an important development in a sport that has dealt with concussions for decades.

Guardian Caps have caught on in the NFL. They went from being optional in practice, to being required in certain practice situations, to now being used by some players in games. This is the first season that the NFL has allowed players the option to wear them on game day and a handful have taken the league up on its offer, including New England Patriots safety Jabrill Peppers.

For those who don't know what Guardian Caps are, they are soft-shelled caps that are stretched overtop of the helmet. The NFL's research concluded that these caps reduce head impact by 10 percent and up to 20 percent for head-to-head collisions.

I am totally for this legislation, and I question people that would not be.

I guess I would have to speak to these NFL players that use them, but from an outside perspective, I see absolutely no downside to wearing these caps. They fit over the helmet, they do not reduce visibility or agility, and most importantly, they help reduce the risk and severity of head injuries.

Concussions, especially in football, have grown into one of the most talked about issues in all of sports. For decades, football players shrugged off head injuries, but as science and research capabilities have expanded over the past 10-20 years, we have finally been able to unveil the long term impacts of concussions. We can no longer just chalk it up to a stinger or getting your bell rung. The consequences are often severe and sometimes deadly.

I have a feeling that Guardian Caps will be required for all players at the NFL level. In the span of just three years they went from being introduced to being worn in games. As more players endure head injuries, the more we'll see these caps be used. I have a feeling that five years from now every NFL player will be required to use them.

So why not start as early as possible? If we nip it in the bud and make it a requirement for high schoolers, it could preserve their health while also getting them used to wearing them by the time they play in college.

Again, the reason why I am for this idea is simply because there is no reason I can think of to reject it. Cosmetics would be the only downside, as they do look ... pronounced ... but so do the gaudy helmets and shoulder pads. We just have grown used to them thanks to half a century of use.

I'm not an alarmist and I usually roll my eyes at the rule revisions that the NFL implements when it comes to player safety. It's a contact sport and injuries are inevitable. It does bother me when the league initiates new rules that change the complexion of the game. In the past decade, we have already seen some of these revisions add up.

Head injuries are no joke, though. You can recover from a sprained ankle, a broken wrist, a pulled hamstring. You can't recover from concussions, you just can't. In the literal sense, sure, you can get back out on the field and be OK, but I am a firm believer that concussions take something away from a person permanently, even if it takes multiple incidents or years to see the problems arise.

So, good on McNamara for engaging on this topic and looking out for our local high school athletes. If this comes to fruition, I'm confident that other states will take notice and follow suit, as they should. Wearing Guardian Caps is a much better solution than changing the rules and altering the sport. Perhaps this could also open the door for other high-impact sports, like hockey and lacrosse for example.

Watching Bishop Hendricken beat Cumberland last Friday night was all I needed to see to declare the Hawks the 2024 state champions.

That's not a hot take, the Hawks are almost always the favorite to win it all, but any doubts or concerns that there may have been were put to bed.

Cumberland fought valiantly and even drew first blood in the second quarter. It was very much a game until late in the third.

Hendricken did what Hendricken does. It relied on its size up front on both offense and defense and let its running backs go to work. Jeremy Seidi is the real deal and has completely filled the void left by Oscar Weah and Ronjai Francis.

Defensively, Hendricken has some athletes in the secondary as well. Offensively, Dylan Lynch has proven that he can lead a passing attack when called on as well. There really are no exploitable holes in this Hendricken lineup. The fact that the Hawks were able to beat one of the state's other elite teams by simply running the ball was eye opening. Hendricken has four senior linemen on offense, and its experience, size, strength and talent were on full display last week. They ran the Cumberland defense over.

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You can't count any team out in sports, but it's hard to picture a team being able to slow down the Hendricken rushing attack. It seems like the way to beat the Hawks will be to put up points early and often - specifically in the passing game - and then in turn hope you can shut down their receivers down the stretch. Hendricken will always win in the trenches.

## Keywords

pitch (/search\_mode/keyword/browse.html?search\_filter=pitch), Guardian caps (/search\_mode/keyword/browse.html?search\_filter= Guardian caps), football (/search\_mode/keyword/browse.html?search\_filter= football)

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