Brutal Beginnings:

Theodore Roosevelt's Diplomatic Influence on Debate over Early American Football

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Senior Division

Paper

Paper: 2,499

Process Paper: 497
Process Paper

How did I choose my topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?

Football has served as a unifying force in both my family and the communities that surround me throughout my early years, including watching Sunday Night Football every weekend. After reading a book called *Undefeated* by Steve Sheinkin, I realized how important football was to those who played it even with the brutality it imposed. When the NHD theme was released, I initially struggled to find a topic, but as I began learning about the history of football it became clear that football was rooted in debate and diplomacy over a century ago. With further research, I discovered that American football was saved through the diplomacy of an unlikely advocate.

How did I conduct my research?

I began my research in many library databases including Proquest and Chronicling America, as well as current newspaper articles. This was aimed at gaining basic knowledge of early American football and exploring the role of Theodore Roosevelt in 1905. Through reading a book called *The Big Scrum* and interviewing its author, John J. Miller, I discovered football’s impact on American life despite continued rule changes and extensive debate. With the addition of primary source newspaper articles including the Washington Post, New York Times, and San Francisco Call, I was able to utilize quotes throughout my final paper.

How did I create my project?

I chose to complete a historical paper for my NHD project because I feel the story of football brutality is best told in words. In the creation of my project, I started by gathering as much information as possible and categorizing it by the arguments I wanted to discuss in my paper. When I began writing, I had already decided on the framework of my essay and knew the quotes that I planned to use in each
section. Once I finished writing, I finalized the appendix for my paper and edited until the word count was under 2,500 words.

**What is my historical argument?**

Although the history of football is little known, it serves as a prime example of the impact of executive power in creating a future for banned activities. With football in jeopardy, Theodore Roosevelt saved the sport through diplomacy, prompting years of debate and compromise for safety. Continued modification of rules and equipment has allowed football to evolve as America’s most popular pastime, attracting millions of fans every year.

**In what ways is your topic significant in history?**

Despite its roots in brutality, Theodore Roosevelt was a champion in diplomacy between various football administrators in 1905. Football players today are social and political advocates who serve as models to wide audiences across the world. Although debate continues to influence how it is played, the universal phenomena of two opposing teams who battle over a ball has come to unite communities across the country. Through continued diplomacy, football has established a lasting foundation and become embedded in the framework of America.
Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

The Atlanta Constitution (Atlanta, GA). "From Gridiron to the Grave." October 31, 1897, 7. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

This historical newspaper article was vital as an example of the impact that muckrakers had on spreading their opinions in newspapers across the east coast. With engaging titles like "From Gridiron to the Grave," they were able to attract large audiences.


This cartoon depicts President Roosevelt running interference against Brutality in Football. It was used in Appendix B of my final project.


This cartoon image depicts Theodore Roosevelt reading surrounded by the issues he attempted to tackle during his presidency including an injured football player labeled "Brutality in Football." This picture was used in Appendix B of my final project.


This newspaper article was used in the legacy section of my final paper to describe the importance of masculinity in football brutality.


This magazine article was used in the beginning of my final paper to describe the brutality of the "flying wedge" and the role it played in the death of Harold Moore in 1905.

This newspaper article was extremely important in my research for describing the direct impacts that rule changes and safety equipment made on football injuries. In my final project, it was used for vital quotes about the decrease in football brutality directly related to Roosevelt's summit in 1905.

file:///Users/denverschoolofthearts/Downloads/213482740_The_Evening_repository.pdf.

Used to describe the goals of the newly formed American Professional Football Association, this newspaper article was vital for understanding the widespread impact of the association on football across the US. This source was used for a quote in the section of my paper titled "A New Era of American Football."


This newspaper article contained information about the influence of the IAAUS after football began expanding. I used it for a quote in my final paper on why the IAAUS was renamed the NCAA in 1909.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88085421/1909-11-29/ed-1/seq-3/#date1=1777&index=4&rows=20&words=Football+football+injuries&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1963&proxtext=football+injuries&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1.

This newspaper article was important in my research to describe the position that the NCAA held following Roosevelt's summit. It was used in my final project for how the NCAA was created and impacted the 1905 football summit, as well as quotes of what practices had to be changed to reduce the brutality of football.

https://www.insidehook.com/article/books/footballs-brutal-history-nfl-learn-from-it.

Depicting football as a battlefield, this cartoon was used for Appendix B in my final. It showed how impactful brutal football was on both players and audiences across the country.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86063615/1897-11-21/ed-1/seq-16/#date1=177
With a unique perspective on football brutality, this newspaper article compared football with Spanish bullfighting. It was used for the background information section of my final essay, including a quote and information on how deadly football had become by the end of the 19th century.


This newspaper article contained a unique comparison between football injuries in 1931 and in 1905 which I used as a quote in my final project.


This newspaper article had information on the importance of professionalism in the creation of the American Professional Football Association in 1920. It was used in the legacy section of my final paper.


This primary source newspaper article provided an opinion on why football should be abolished, and provided guidelines for what could be done to save it. It was used in my final project for a quote on how officials were able to save football after brutality almost led to its demise.


This newspaper article was used for a quote in the legacy section of my final paper describing the growth of the National Football League after it was founded in 1920.

This newspaper article contained vital information on how introduction of the forward pass impacted football brutality. In my final paper, I used it for a quote in the short term legacy of my final paper.


This newspaper article from the New York Tribune had crucial information on the future of football in 1906. In my final paper, it was used for a quote as well as in Appendix C to illustrate the new formations used under the new rules.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1905-11-26/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1905&index=15&rows=20&words=Harold+Moore&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1905&proxtext=harold+moore&y=4&x=10&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1.

This newspaper article was used for overall information on Harold Moore's death and examples of the football brutality that was so prevalent in 1905. It had descriptions of how he died as well as the effect of his death across the east coast.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85052116/1905-11-29/ed-1/seq-3/#date1=1777&index=4&rows=20&words=brutality+football&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1963&proxtext=football+brutality&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1.

This primary source newspaper article was used throughout my final paper to show the magnitude of football brutality during the historic 1905 season. It included data about the number and types of injuries with various data tables used in my appendix.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84025841/1905-12-16/ed-1/seq-3/#date1=1777&index=6&rows=20&words=brutal+brutality+football&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1963&proxtext=football+brutality&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1.

With additional information about football brutality in 1905, this newspaper article also had information on the prevalence of football injuries during the 1905 season. I used it for a quote in my final paper and overall information about early football.

Roosevelt, Theodore. Letter to Martha Bulloch, November 19, 1876.
The letter from Theodore Roosevelt to his mother was a great source for direct information on his views of football after watching his first game as a freshman in college. It also included an important quote describing his views on foul play, a subject that would influence him in the future as well.


This newspaper article had valuable information on the "new era" of football that began after the original football rules committee was established. I used it for a quote as well as knowledge on how football changed after Roosevelt's summit.


Used for great information and quotes, this newspaper article had a unique perspective on the distinct relationship between money and football brutality. In my final paper it was used for the background to how football became so brutal in the late 19th century.


This newspaper article had interesting opinions of the future of football after the summit, highlighting that football was still very brutal. In my final project, it was used for multiple quotes on football brutality directly after the summit.

_The San Francisco Call_ (San Francisco, CA). "Fate of Football in Balance." December 5, 1905, 10. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85066387/1905-12-05/ed-1/seq-10/#words=FATE+FOOTBALL.

This newspaper article mentioned the lack of publication in newspapers following Roosevelt's summit due to the confidential information discussed. It was used during the main event of my final paper for overall information.

This newspaper article was important to multiple areas of my paper, covering the death of Harold Moore as well as Columbia's termination of football directly after Roosevelt's summit. It was used for multiple quotes and overall information of the threats present to football's future in 1905.


This newspaper article illustrated the magnitude of football injuries and deaths during 1905. I used it in my final paper to explain the importance of these deaths and how it impacted the fight for football abolishment.


Arguably the most important source in my project, this newspaper article was crucial for detailed information on what happened at Roosevelt's summit in 1905. It was used for various quotes regarding when the summit began, ended, and who was there.


This newspaper article was very influential in my final project with a variety of information from the difficulty in finding someone to hold the summit to results of the summit. It was used throughout many sections of my final paper, especially during the main event for quotes.

**Secondary Sources**

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/score-one-for-roosevelt-83762245/.

This magazine article was used in many ways for an overall knowledge of my topic, as well as many quotes and perspectives from many important figures during the summit including the Harvard athletic director and the NCAA. It gave me a greater knowledge of the immense debate and conflicting perspectives involved during the discussion of football abolishment during the early 1900s.

This secondary source website shows the ledger with the first documented case of a player being paid to play football in 1892. It was used in the appendix of my final paper.


Although it was secondary, this source provided great information on how Charles Elliot's opposing perspective impacted the debate present over football brutality. It was also used throughout my final paper for the legacy of his impact on football today.


This memorial lecture on Richard Schneider had great information on how his research impacted the medical field and the future of football during the 1960s and 1970s. It was used during the long-term legacy of my project for a quote on the impact of his research on football.


This encyclopedia article was a great overall resource for learning about journalism during the Progressive Era. In my final project, it was used as overall background information.


This newspaper article sparked my interest because the summit that Obama held is almost an exact mirror of the one that Roosevelt held in 1905. I used it in the long-term legacy section of my final project for a quote describing who was at the summit.


This website had interesting data points describing NFL viewer numbers and how much football is watched in America today. In my final paper, it was used as a quote in my conclusion section.
This newspaper article included lots of information on the beginning of injury data for football injuries. I used it in my final paper for multiple quotes on when injury data began and what it revealed about the brutality present.


The report of football injury research was a valuable resource for an overview of football injuries as well as highlighting the major milestones that football injury levels have passed since the beginning of research in 1931. In my final project, the data was used for a quote in the legacy section of my paper and in Appendix D.


This magazine article provided great overall information on how Walter Camp influenced early football rules including a quote on the specific rules he implemented. It also questioned what football's future will be with the current levels of brutality present, compared to those in the early 1900s.


This book was a great resource for information for all aspects of my project. It had extensive background information on Theodore Roosevelt's childhood and the summit he held, as well as his legacy in football brutality. In my final paper, I also included multiple quotes from his book.

Telephone interview by the author. Hillsdale, MI. December 1, 2021.

John J Miller had important knowledge about Theodore Roosevelt's impact on football after writing a book titled "The Big Scrum." My interview with him was beneficial for overall information and multiple quotes used throughout my final paper. He had extensive knowledge on the history of football, Theodore Roosevelt's background, and the legacy of his 1905 football summit.

This article had great overall information about the evolution of football safety equipment from football's origin through today. I used it in the legacy section of my paper for overall information.


This magazine article was very important for Theodore Roosevelt's legacy in football. It has data on the evolution of new rules after the summit as well as current protection and injury data that was used throughout my final project.


This website was used throughout my paper as a secondary source for general information on the evolution of football from its brutal roots through today.


This newspaper article was helpful for first hand information on how money played a major role in football brutality levels leading into the 20th century. I used it for information describing early professionalization in American football and to describe the influence of muckrakers during the Progressive era.


Although this newspaper article was a secondary source, it had a great quote on why football helmets were typically discouraged in the early 1900s, which I used in my final paper.


This newspaper article served as a great example of publication about CTE during the early 2000s. It was used as a quote in my final paper about the impact of CTE on current football brutality and debate.
Written in 1961, over 50 years after Roosevelt's summit, this newspaper article was helpful for quotes said during the summit and perspective during the early 1960s. The article was used in my final project for quotes that Roosevelt said and overall knowledge of how the summit was viewed in the news 56 years after it happened.


Written by a government sponsored website, this article had helpful information on the role that Theodore Roosevelt played in the end of the Russo-Japanese War. His diplomacy during creation of the Treaty of Portsmouth was used as background in my final paper to show how he impacted football in 1905.


This journal article gave me eye-opening insight into the current number of lawsuits there are against the NFL. It is used in my final project for overall information, as it surprised me how prevalent brutality still is in football today.
After concerns were raised by newspaper editorials and college administration over the safety of American football players in the early 1900s, President Theodore Roosevelt held a summit in the White House on October 9th, 1905. The summit formalized diplomacy between players and American football organizations, establishing a platform for the creation of rules and regulations that helped save the sport from dissolution. Over a century later, further debate over implementation and advancement of player safety regulations has continued to affect the way that America’s most popular sport is played.

The Death That Shook the Nation

On a brisk autumn afternoon in 1905, Harold Moore, a star player on the Union College football team, lined up to play the final game of the season against New York University. What he didn't know was that this would be the last game of his football career. Late in the first quarter, players stood in position for a common play called the flying wedge. They held onto the wedge belt of the person next to them, forming a “rush line” of up to 10 people and encouraging high-speed collisions.¹ The game was close and either team used scarcely anything but mass plays.² At the end of the play, Harold Moore lay under both teams, unconscious. At 6:40pm that night at Fordham Hospital, he was pronounced dead from “cerebral hemorrhages.”³ Harold Moore’s death cast a deep gloom over New York City,⁴ and dominated headlines throughout the east coast, forcing many associations to question the future of football.

³ "Union Football," 1.
Brutal Beginnings

During the 1870s, football exploded in popularity throughout the eastern United States as a common athletic pastime similar to rugby. Rules were very limited and typically unwritten which led to vicious hits and mass plays often ending in severe injuries. “There was no passing. Kicking the ball was the most efficient way to score, and blocking was illegal.” With increasing attention, football developed into a lucrative business attracting widespread audiences.

Professional football debuted on November 12, 1892 when a AAA college player named William (Pudge) Heffelfinger was openly paid $500 to play the game. (See Appendix A) Controversy raged over salaries and awards, highlighting a distinct relationship between “the taking of large sums of money by persons interested in college football and violence of play.” As the number of college players increased, the level of fatalities and serious injuries followed suit.

In 1897, Spanish bullfighting was said to be less deadly than American football with one matador killed in the previous year compared to 13 deaths and hundreds of injuries from playing football. Football as played by American college teams had become “the deadliest national sport known in any civilized country.” Debate over football and its future marked not only a turning point for the development of sports in the United States, but also a crisis for what was becoming the most dominant force in American politics, the Progressive Era.

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7 "Discussion of Gridiron Game," The Salt Lake Tribune (Salt Lake City, UT), December 10, 1905, 35.
8 "Football - Its Dangers and Its Victims - Legislatures against the Game - The Changes Needed," Kansas City Journal (Kansas City, MO), November 21, 1897, 16.
In response to problems raised by rapid industrialization and urbanization, the Progressive Movement gained significant momentum during the 1890s. Reformers attempted to eliminate corruption and inefficiency, reintroduce democratic practices, and improve standards of safety. This intense period of self-criticism and political unrest led to a fundamental shift in the relationship between citizens and their government. Motivated by the betterment of the American people, journalists known as “muckrakers” exposed many of the dark corners of American life and carried their message of reform through mass-circulated newspapers and magazines. College athletics soon attracted attention from these muckrakers who burrowed into the brutal plays and unethical activities of win-at-all-cost coaches with headlines such as “From Gridiron to the Grave” and “Two Curable Evils,” describing the relationship between football brutality and money. As debate raged among reformers and colleges across the east coast, an unlikely advocate of football emerged: President Theodore Roosevelt.

**Presidential Intervention: A Skilled Diplomat**

Theodore Roosevelt’s early life was a chronicle of sickness. Chronic asthma plagued him for years, with his only relief being in exercise. This experience shaped Roosevelt’s activities and gave rise to lifelong beliefs about the value of fitness, athletics, and later, football. After attending his first game in New Haven, Connecticut in 1876, Roosevelt became fascinated by the newfound sport of American football. In a letter to his mother the day after the game, he was frustrated by Harvard's loss, writing, “I am sorry to say we were beaten, principally because  

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3. "From Gridiron to the Grave," *The Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), October 31, 1897, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
our opponents played very foul.” Limiting foul play, similar to that expressed in the letter, shaped his support for football in years to come.

By the turn of the 20th century criticism against football continued to broaden, introducing new figures into the debate between reform and abolishment. Walter Camp, credited as the Father of American Football, emerged as one of Roosevelt's greatest supporters. After playing football for Yale from 1876 to 1882, Camp became a football legislator. His influence was instrumental in differentiating football from English rugby through enforcing a line of scrimmage with “discrete plays instead of scrums.”

Despite gaining support from across the country, Roosevelt did not stand unopposed. The president of Harvard, Charles Elliot, transformed Harvard into a preeminent research university but disliked competitive sports. His distaste for football in particular led him to call for the complete suspension of intercollegiate play. Roosevelt’s protracted feud over football reveals the fundamental split in opinion that existed among America’s elites at the time. However, Roosevelt, the skilled diplomat who had negotiated the Treaty of Portsmouth concluding the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, earning him the Nobel Peace Prize, employed his skills a month later in the football arena.

Widespread discussion of football brutality brought to light the unprecedented deaths and injuries football had caused from 1900-1905. During the first five years of the 20th century, sixty-eight football related fatalities and 539 injuries were reported by the Paducah Sun Newspaper. During the 1905 season alone, all records for football brutality were smashed when...

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16 Theodore Roosevelt to Martha Bulloch, November 19, 1876.
17 Ben McGrath, "Does Football Have a Future?,” The New Yorker, January 31, 2011.
19 Battista, "Oval Office."
21 "Number of Deaths Is Now Nineteen," The Paducah Sun (Paducah, KY), November 29, 1905, 3.
“nineteen lives were sacrificed.” To chronicle all the injuries would require the use of thousands of names.

Reform quickly became recognized as the only path to diminish the brutality plaguing American football. However, difficulty appeared in finding “a supreme central authority which could initiate reforms with effect.” President Roosevelt had all the qualifications for such effective initiation. (See Appendix B)

With the object of bringing about reform in football, a conference was held between President Roosevelt, Secretary Root, and some of the leading coaches and athletic advisors representing Harvard, Princeton, and Yale universities at 1:30pm on October 9th, 1905 in the White House. Roosevelt hoped with the cooperation of college authorities and athletic advisors, the rules of the game could be changed to “eliminate so far as possible the brutal elements of football.” If rough play in football was not ruled out, he vowed to abolish the game by executive edict. Through diplomacy, Roosevelt encouraged compromise between advocates and dissonants of football. “This was a clever strategy that involved persuasion rather than a dictate.”

By the end of the summit, it was agreed that honorable obligation existed “to carry out in letter and in spirit the rules of the game of football relating to roughness, holding, and foul play” and the notive [sic] coaches of the universities pledged themselves to so regard it and to do their

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22 "Grim Football Record," Richmond Planet (Richmond, VA), December 16, 1905, 3.
26 "Hears Football."
utmost to carry out that obligation.” If the American style of playing was retained as the basic principle for the football of the future, the evolution would have to include these changes: “college athletic officials with more power in their hands; more drastic enforcement of drastic rules by a larger number of officials on the field; and penalties great enough to largely prevent rough play.”

Although the question of football and its rules was in the hands of the football experts, the future of the sport remained doubtful. One month after the summit, Columbia terminated its football program, while New York University and Stanford prepared to follow suit. “No other game brought about such close and violent personal contact, no other game was so likely to be complicated and discredited by collisions between individuals whose ethical ideas were underdeveloped.”

After meeting in December and January, 62 institutions became charter members of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States in March of 1906. The Football Rules Committee was to “use every possible endeavor to bring about such a modification of the rules as shall, in its judgment, tend to reduce to a minimum the dangers of physical injuries to the players, and at the same time retain, so far as possible, the desirable, wholesome features of the game.” Rules such as doubling the distance to be gained on three downs and creating a neutral zone at the line of scrimmage greatly discouraged brutality. The committee also placed a ban on the flying wedge, a change that could have prevented the death of Harold Moore just months earlier.

29 "Pledge to the President."
30 "Discussion of Gridiron," 35.
31 "Not Much Glory on the Gridiron," The Salt Lake Tribune (Salt Lake City, UT), December 17, 1905, 36.
33 "Not Much Glory," 36.
The introduction of the forward pass emerged as the most revolutionary rule change in football history. By “eliminating as far as possible the almost continual use of mass plays,” the forward pass opened the game of football and supported a major decrease in injuries. On April 1, 1906, the American Intercollegiate Football Rules Committee adopted the new playing rules. (Appendix C)

By the beginning of the 1906 season, football was “entering a new era.” Due to the change in rules and reduction of rough play born during Roosevelt’s summit, football injuries and deaths decreased by the end of the 1907 season. From the start of the season, only “a dozen players died as the result of injuries received on the gridiron” with no players killed from any of the larger colleges.

A New Era of American Football

With renewed purpose, football entered an extensive period of growth in the following years. The Intercollegiate Athletic Association continued to expand after its inception, becoming the primary governing power for football across the country by the end of the decade. In 1909, it was renamed the National Collegiate Athletic Association because “the influence of the association had become so extended.”

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37 "Football Rules Made at Last," The Salt Lake Herald (Salt Lake City, UT), April 2, 1906, 7.
39 "Fewer Fatalities Reported This Year from Football Injuries," East Oregonian (Pendleton), November 23, 1907, 5.
40 "Drastic Measures Are Proposed for Football," The Evening Statesmen (Walla Walla), November 29, 1909, 3.
Debate between professional and collegiate football intensified during the next decade, spurring the creation of the American Professional Football Association on September 17, 1920 to limit “luring players out of college for the professional game” and “bidding for players between rival clubs.” After being renamed the National Football League in 1922, the NFL had grown to “twenty teams” in 1925. By 1932, a separate rules committee was established “charged with developing changes independent of the colleges.” However, the priority of spectacular crowd-pleasing play by members when they developed new rules often came at the cost of player safety.

Although consistent injury data did not begin until 1931 with “the first recorded study of athletic injuries,” it became obvious that brutality was still prevalent in football across the country. (See Appendix D) Early data revealed this “definite accident pattern.” Football had killed 40 boys and young men during the 1931 season, a number closely comparable to those recorded in 1905.

By 1940, the NFL Rules Committee published its first independent rulebook including rules that legalized passing from any point behind the line of scrimmage. The primary purpose of the NFL Rules Committee remains the same today: “to provide a maximum of entertainment insofar as it can be controlled by the rules and officials.”

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46 Moser, "A Brief History," Chicago Mag.
47 "They Don't Have to Get Hurt," *The Evening Star* (Washington D.C., DC), November 27, 1949, 119.
48 "They Don't," 119.
could not be limited without continual modification of regulations and the introduction of revolutionary safety equipment.

Historically, helmets “symbolized football’s duality of valor and violence” and were typically discouraged as football was considered “an essentially masculine game.” Although they were introduced during the early 1900s, helmets did not become widespread until the early 1940s with requirement by the NCAA, as well as youth leagues and professional associations across the country. With the addition of facemasks in 1955 and the evolution of padding from suspension systems to fluid filled padding by the late 1950s, the priority of safety stood juxtaposed to a priority of audience entertainment.

New Topics of Debate: Presidential Diplomacy Continues

Although vast reform during the early and mid 20th century played a major role in the success and expansion of American football across the US, debate erupted over the prevalence of brain injuries sustained while playing. From 1965-1969, data suggested an average of 20 deaths from brain injuries per year. As football continued to expand, attracting wider audiences and increased professionalism, specialization also became common. Increased intensity and skill sets suited to particular facets of the game came at the demise of players that covered both offense and defense.

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52 “Some Sporting Chat,” The Birmingham Age Herald (Birmingham, AL), September 30, 1910, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038485/1910-09-30/ed-1/seq-10/#date1=1893&index=7&rows=20&words=Football+masculine&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1915&protext=football+masculinity&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1.
54 Moser, “A Brief History,” Chicago Mag.
55 McGrath, “Does Football Have.”
During the early 1970s, the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment was formed to “protect players against the extreme forces that caused those injuries.”\(^ {56}\) However, football was held to no standard regarding concussions and the helmet makers themselves largely financed NOCSAE.\(^ {57}\) This remains true today. Richard Schneider, a neuroscientist at the University of Michigan, also began studying head and neck injuries. His experiments resulted in “a dramatic reduction in the incidence of athletics-related "serious" head and spinal cord injury.”\(^ {58}\) In 1990, the Annual Survey of Football Injury Research published that for the first time since research began, “there was not a direct fatality in football at any level of play.”\(^ {59}\)

The first diagnosis of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) in 2002 further informed the quest to limit head injuries. CTE is a brain degenerative disorder caused by repeated head trauma, presenting as memory loss, confusion, aggression, depression, and dementia. On January 18, 2007, an article titled: “Expert Ties Ex-Player’s Suicide to Brain Damage from Football,”\(^ {60}\) debuted on the front page of the *New York Times*. Currently, there are 242 concussion-based lawsuits pending in federal and state courts against the NFL in addition to 4500 actions against the NFL since 2011.\(^ {61}\) A lack of research and scientific conclusion has spurred years of “contentious debate between the league and the medical community about long-term repercussions of concussions and other head trauma.”\(^ {62}\)

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62 Weinmeyer, "Concussion-Related Litigation."
In 2014, mirroring the actions of President Roosevelt a century earlier, President Obama held a White House summit to discuss sports concussions. He invited “200 sports officials, medical experts, parent activists and young athletes”\(^63\) to discuss growing concerns over injuries sustained during football, especially in young players. With support from presidents, safety in football remains at the forefront of national discussion.

**A Profound Legacy of Football Brutality**

Despite its roots in brutality, diplomacy saved American football from abolishment in 1905, raising decades of debate. While football is unique to America, lining up two opposing teams who battle over a ball is almost a universal phenomenon.\(^64\) Today, football is undisputed as America’s most popular sport with regular season NFL games averaging 17.1 million viewers in 2021 and ranking among the most watched programs on television.\(^65\) Gaining publicity, players are social and political advocates serving as diplomatic ambassadors for widening audiences. Football is sewn into the fabric of American life, serving as a unifier in communities across the country and cementing its future for generations of debate.

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\(^64\) Miller, *The Big Scrum*, 32.

\(^65\) ESPN Enterprises, "NFL Regular-Season Ratings Increase 10% over Last Season," ESPN, last modified January 12, 2022, accessed March 8, 2022.
Appendix A

This accounting ledger from a game played on November 12, 1892 in Pittsburgh is the first documented proof that a player was paid to play football when William "Pudge" Heffelfinger was paid $500 to play.

Appendix B

The cartoons in the top row depict Theodore Roosevelt’s leadership in running interference against football brutality. On the bottom drawing, football is illustrated as if it were a war fought on a battlefield, showing the magnitude of injuries and deaths present in its early days.

Appendix C

This diagram shows the general plan for offensive and defensive formations under the new rules established 1906.

Appendix D

These data tables illustrate the football fatalities published in newspapers during 1905, and formally recorded beginning in 1931 through the Annual Survey of Football Injury Research. (see image on the right) This data demonstrates the continued brutality present in football despite significant improvements in rule changes and equipment.
