

- SUBJECT:** Limiting full-contact football drills
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 11 ayes — Aycock, Allen, J. Davis, Deshotel, Dutton, Farney, Huberty, K. King, Ratliff, Rodriguez, Villarreal
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Eric Nauman, Purdue Neurotrauma Group; Sarah Naylor, Sports Legacy Institute; Blake Ripple; Lori Ripple; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Erin Garrison, Texas Brain Injury Alliance; Lauren Rose, Texans Care for Children; Paula Trietsch Chaney)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Brent Connett, Texas Conservative Coalition; Curtis Culwell, Texas High School Coaches Association; Ken McCraw, Texas Association of Community Schools; Don Rogers, Texas Rural Education Association; Howell Wright, Texas Association of Mid-Size Schools)
- On — Hunt Batjer, UT Southwestern Medical Center; (*Registered, but did not testify*: David Anderson, Texas Education Agency)
- BACKGROUND:** The University Interscholastic League (UIL) was created by the University of Texas in 1909 to provide extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests for elementary and secondary school students. For athletics, UIL organizes and facilitates region and state championships in such sports as football, basketball, baseball, cheerleading, soccer, and tennis.
- In 2011, the 82nd Legislature enacted CSHB 2038, which requires school districts or charter schools to establish a protocol for dealing with students who could have sustained a concussion while participating in a school sponsored athletic event or practice.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 887 would add Education Code, sec. 33.096 to require the UIL to prohibit by rule a high school or middle school from allowing football team members to participate in full-contact drills for more than a total of one hour each week.

The prohibition would not apply to drills involving a player running:

- without opposition or resistance from another person or object;
- with opposition or resistance from a bag, shield, or pad regardless of whether a person was holding that object; or
- a player running at full speed against another player until the time of contact if both players remain on their feet and contact is made above the waist.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2013, and would apply beginning with the 2013-14 school year.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSHB 887 would help protect young football players in Texas from the damaging effects of traumatic brain injury. Research has shown that a young person's brain is still developing. Although the damage caused by powerful, crunching tackles has garnered most of the concern in the sport, student athletes often receive multiple hits to the head that can seem superficial and may go undetected but which could prove dangerous over time. Each hit sustained has a compounding effect and can produce long-term health problems, such as depression, aggression, Alzheimer's, and other disorders that show themselves long after the impact has occurred.

The bill would reduce significantly the pace of full-contact drills to give student athletes a respite from the collisions that can cause traumatic brain injury. The bill would allow some specific drills that involve minimal contact to continue. These drills are important for student athletes to improve their performance in the sport without placing them at great risk.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

The mandate proposed by CSHB 887 would be difficult to enforce and would limit the control that coaches have over their football teams. Coaches have great care for their student athletes and know best how to set practice standards that are safe. This bill would remove that discretion.