



*behavior research center's*

# ***Rocky Mountain Poll***

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FOOTBALL CONCUSSIONS: BROAD AWARENESS EXISTS OF BRAIN  
INJURY RISKS ...YET MOST WOULD LET THEIR CHILD PLAY &  
OPPOSE FEDERAL INTERVENTION ON SAFETY

Phoenix, Arizona. November 5, 2013. Two-thirds of Arizonans are already aware of the emerging controversy regarding concussions and serious brain injuries affecting athletes in the game of American football. Furthermore, whether they are aware of the controversy or not, 85 percent believe that brain injury risks are greater for professional football athletes than for youth who do not play the game, including 63 percent who classify the risk to professional football athletes as “much greater” than for others. The public has similar views on the risks to high school and college football athletes: more than 80 percent believe high school and college football players run a greater risk of suffering a brain injury and for both of those levels of football, half consider the risks to be “much greater” than for youth who do not play the game.

On the other hand, and perhaps a reflection of the tendency of people to believe “*it won't happen to us,*” seven out of ten adults in the survey say they would let a child of theirs who wants to play college or high school football do so. Love of the game and perhaps belief that player protections are already being improved may contribute to the broad willingness of parents to let their children play this demanding sport.

The survey also finds that a by a narrow five to four majority, Arizonans oppose the federal governmental taking steps to make the game safer for football players, a finding that is perhaps not surprising considering the recent tortured efforts by elected federal officials in the Congress to prove their incompetence at reaching consensus on just about anything. Exactly 50 percent oppose the

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federal government getting involved in the issue, but nearly four in ten (38%) favor federal intervention. Support for federal intervention is greatest among Democrats, women and the public outside of Maricopa County.

Sixty-four percent of Arizonans say they are aware of the concussion / brain injury issue in football, including 41 percent who claim to have heard “a lot” about it. This is a high level of awareness, especially since the issue has attracted significant media attention only in recent months. Young adults and Hispanics are the least likely to be aware, with 50 percent or more in each group basically unaware of the issue, a curious finding since young adults are among the most likely to be involved in the sport and Hispanics appear to be increasingly involved in playing football. Nonetheless, the principal finding is that awareness is already quite broad-based despite the issue being headline news only recently.

Consumers also recognize that the risk of serious concussion resulting in brain injury is greatest at the professional level, but large percentages (80%+) deem it a significant risk for college and high school players as well. Notwithstanding broad awareness of the brain injury risks acknowledged by the general public, seven of ten would allow one of their children who expressed an interest in playing football at either the college or high school level do so.

-30-

EDITOR’S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2013-IV-02), is based on 702 interviews with heads of household statewide including 438 registered voters statewide, conducted between October 17 and October 25, 2013. Interviewing was conducted in both English or Spanish by professional interviewers of the Behavior Research Center on both landlines and cell phones. Where necessary, figures for age, sex, race and political party were weighted to bring them into line with their actual proportion in the population. In a sample of this size, one can say with a 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 3.8 percent of what they would have been had the entire population been surveyed and 4.8 percent had the entire voter population been surveyed. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program sponsored by the Center.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

ENCLOSED: Statistical tables.

STATISTICAL DATA

Behavior Research Center  
Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona  
RMP (2013-IV-02)

For this and other polls, see [www.brcpolls.com/results](http://www.brcpolls.com/results).

“In recent months there have been news stories about concussions suffered by football players at the professional, college and high school levels that may be related to serious brain injuries. Would you say that you have heard a lot, some, only a little or nothing at all about this issue?”

	<b>A Lot</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Little or Nothing</b>
Statewide	41%	23%	36%
Men	47	25	28
Women	34	23	43
Under 35 Years of Age	33	15	52
35 to 54	47	21	32
55 Years or Older	40	35	25
Caucasian	45	27	28
Hispanic	31	18	51
Other	36	16	48

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“As far as you know, do individuals who play football at each of the following levels run a much greater risk, somewhat greater risk or no greater risk than individuals who do not play football of suffering concussions that result in long term brain injury?”

| <b>Players in</b>     | <b>Much Greater Risk</b> | <b>Somewhat Greater Risk</b> | <b>No Greater Risk Or Unsure</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Professional Football | 63%                      | 22%                          | 15%                              |
| College Football      | 56                       | 27                           | 17                               |
| High School Football  | 47                       | 34                           | 19                               |

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“If you had a child in (high school / college) who was interested in playing football, would you allow them to do so or not?”

	<b>Would Allow</b>	<b>Would Not Allow</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
At High School Level	70%	20%	10%
At College Level	75	17	8

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“And do you favor or do you oppose the federal government getting involved in trying to make the game of football safer for athletes?”

|              | <b>Favor</b> | <b>Oppose</b> | <b>Unsure</b> |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Statewide    | 38%          | 50%           | 12%           |
| Democrats    | 49           | 41            | 10            |
| Independents | 34           | 57            | 9             |
| Republicans  | 27           | 66            | 7             |
| Men          | 34           | 58            | 8             |
| Women        | 43           | 43            | 14            |
| Maricopa     | 34           | 52            | 14            |
| Pima         | 45           | 48            | 7             |
| Rural        | 45           | 47            | 8             |

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