

USA Football would like to let you know of a study recently published by the medical journal *JAMA Neurology*, a publication of the American Medical Association.

This study focused on long-term effects of playing high school football. The results may be of interest to you, your peers and your league's parents.

The study, which may be read by [clicking here](#), examined later-life cognitive impairment and depression among 3,904 former high school football players who graduated from high school in 1957.

The research indicates no significant differences in these areas between the former high school players and their peers who did not play high school football. In addition, the football-playing students showed no increased risk of anger, anxiety, hostility, or heavy alcohol use.

These results are similar to those of a Mayo Clinic study published in December 2016, which examined a smaller population of men who played high school football. This study found no increased risk of dementia, Parkinson's Disease or ALS compared to a non-football playing group. More information on this Mayo Clinic study resides [here](#).

The JAMA Neurology study has significant strengths in that it includes a large sample of students and was carefully controlled for important variables.

However, while the study indicates cognitive decline is not associated with playing high school football, it did not track which players had concussions and sub-concussive injuries, to see if those players had more negative outcomes in aging. There may be a subset of football players who do experience long term negative outcomes in aging.

It is also important to note that the authors point out that many aspects of the speed and power of the sport have changed since the 1950s, though it could also be argued that rules and equipment modifications have evolved for the better as has knowledge of how to diagnose and treat concussion.

To learn how USA Football may further assist your league through our programs and resources, [please contact your community's USA Football Regional Manager](#).

Thank you for all that you do for young athletes who love to play our sport while gaining its benefits both on and off the field.

Sincerely,

USA Football