

8th Grade
Assessment 1

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GRADE: Eighth

NAME OF ASSESSMENT:

Informational Reading and Research-Based Argument Essay Writing Performance Assessment

STANDARDS ASSESSED:

- Students will quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (RI.8.1)
- Students will read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grade 6-8 complexity band independently and proficiently. (RI.8.10)
- Students will write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. (W.8.1)

Depth of Knowledge Level of task: Levels 2-4

Task Details:

- **Duration of administration:** Three class periods, recommended across two days
- **Time of year when administered:** December
- **Materials needed:**
 - Video clip "Notebook: Kids and Sports" Video from CBS news (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CV-WqlorsBM>)
 - Video clip "Sports: How Much Is Too Much?" Video from KCRA.com (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrP68OD355w>) and video projection
 - "What in the Name of High School Football" by Hank Hill
 - "Are High School Sports Good For Kids?" by Daniel Gould, Ph.D.
 - Alternate text: "High School, College Football Comes With Risk" by Jeffrey Perkel (Note: this text could be used as a pre-assessment text or substituted for the Hank Hill article in a post-assessment.)

Explanation of Standards Alignment

RI.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- Students will respond to text-dependent questions that prompt them to analyze explicit and implicit evidence from a grade-level text.
- In their argument essays, students will call on their research, analyzing the claims from source articles, and citing the textual evidence from those sources that most strongly support the claim of the source author as well as their own arguments.

RI.8.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 6-8 complexity band independently and proficiently.

- Students will read and respond to a grade level text, demonstrating comprehension.

W.8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- Students will write a research-based argument essay.

Overview of Assessment

****Note:** Suggested teacher prompts follow – please alter and make note of alterations based on your own conversational style and the ways in which you’ve talked about reading and writing nonfiction in your own classroom. The tasks below could be administered in different ways.**

Preparation for the Assessment:

- *Make copies of student packets –(see student packet template at the end of this document)*
- *Have loose leaf paper available for essay writing and if students need more writing space for their summary writing.*
- *Cue the videos (see materials information for URLs)*
- *Make copies of the articles for students:*
 - “What in the Name of High School Football” by Hank Hill
 - “Are High School Sports Good For Kids?” by Daniel Gould, Ph.D.
- *Chart expectations for argument writing:*
 - Quickly make a plan to organize your argument and your evidence
 - Introduce your topic
 - Take a position: make clear what you are arguing for or against
 - Organize your reasons and supporting details in paragraphs
 - Use relevant information from the sources you studied to support your claim
 - Acknowledge and refute the counterclaim
 - Include direct quotes from sources
 - Maintain an essayist’s tone
 - Use transitional words and phrases
 - Write a conclusion

Suggested Introduction:

“Students, we are about to start a quick research project together. This project will give us the chance to do a lot of different things. You’ll have the opportunity to learn some new ideas, and to think through different sides of an important issue: high school sports. I think you’ll be surprised by how rapidly, efficiently, and wisely you can research and argue a position.”

“A lot of this work will feel like some of the work that we have been doing all unit long with our research-based argument essays. For this mini-research project, you will be investigating some of the research on youth sports. Some of these ideas you’ll encounter are in support of sports programs and others argue that sports programs can be harmful for students. It’s a complicated subject.”

“This assessment will feel like a mini-research project, where you will have to understand, weigh, and communicate the value of youth sports based on the information presented in the digital sources, articles, and charts that you will experience. You’ll call on all you know about not just reading sources, but reading them critically, really analyzing their validity.”

“Once you’ve researched some of the issues related to youth sports, you are going to use the information that you discover to choose a side. You will eventually use all the facts and statistics that you learn to present a written argument to a school board, your mayor, or the editor of a newspaper on the subject of high school sports. Because you’ll be writing these arguments based on your research, you’re going to want to be able to quote experts, and reference important facts and details that will convince your audience. So during the research period, use what you know

about taking notes to get all the detailed information and specific references that you may want to use in your letter. Again, it is important that you use facts, ideas, quotes, and statistics from the texts AND NOT JUST YOUR OWN OPINION to help you construct your argument. It's also important that you analyze your sources, not just refer to them."

"I want you to know some things about what we are about to do before we start. First, this mini-project might feel like a test just because you'll be working independently, but it's not the kind of test that just gives you a grade or a score. This experience will allow us to see all that you can do as a reader, as a writer, and as a thinker. At the end of our units, we will try this again and you will see how much you've grown. It will also allow me to learn more about what I can do to help you become an even more powerful writer and student."

Video text as introduction to the topic:

Video #1: "Notebook: Kids and Sports"

"We're going to watch a video that introduces some ideas and information about the topic of kids and sports. You'll have the opportunity to watch this two-minute video twice. You will probably just watch the video the first time, think about it, and take notes during your second viewing. Don't forget, if you hear important quotes, record them and make it clear that you're quoting directly, so you can accurately quote from the video later when you write your essay."

Video#2: "Sports: How Much Is Too Much?"

"Let's watch a second video. Remember, you are researchers right now, trying to gather information about the pros and cons of sports for young people. The second time we watch, take notes, including any quotes or statistics that you might cite in your essay."

Task 1: Response to: "What in the Name of High School Football"

Task 2: Response to: "Are High School Sports Good for Kids?"

"You have the opportunity now to add to your research by reading two articles about sports in high school. Respond to the questions and be sure to use details from the texts and to explain how those details support the authors' central ideas. You may decide to use some of this text evidence and your analysis of it in your argument essay."

Task 5: Writing a Research-Based Argument Essay

"Imagine that your school district is going to make a decision about continuing to fund sports programs in the schools. You have a chance to write an argument essay that will be read to the mayor, printed in the paper, or presented to the head of the school board or PTA. Your essay should state a position or claim by taking a clear side, back it up with research, and refute the other side of the argument. Your job is to argue whether, overall, sports are more helpful or harmful to young people. Use what you know about argument essay writing to structure your writing. Be sure to back up your claim with reasons and evidence, supported by facts and details, and analysis of sources from your research. Be sure also to: (*point to chart*)"

Name: _____ Class: _____

**Eighth Grade Informational Reading/Argument Writing Performance Assessment
Student Packet**

Note-taking from videos

Use the space below to write down quotes and other important information that you might want to use in your argument essay. Remember you will have to take a position about whether sports are more helpful or harmful for kids.

Name: _____ Class: _____

Task 1: Response to Reading:

“What in the Name of High School Football” by Hank Hill

The author of this article claims that:

“I am against the unfair and lopsided allocation of community resources to varsity sports that benefit one select group of students over another.”

Choose the quote from below that you feel most strongly supports this claim and write to explain why it is effective.

Quote#1: “Our school will shell out \$26,000 this winter alone to pay for ice time for the hockey teams. That’s before even a dollar is spent on coaches, insurance, transportation, and equipment. At the end of the season, that \$26,000 will literally be water vapor. The drama department limps along without even a decent set of body microphones for productions which include 50 students at a time.”

Quote#2: “The athletic program at MVRHS has become almost a religion. The administration openly concedes that our mostly sleep-deprived student body – many of whom catch a 6:20 a.m. school bus – is the result of a forced homage to sports. The school day must start that early so athletes who travel off the Vineyard for away games limit their missed classes.”

Quote# _____ strongly supports the author’s claim. This is effective evidence because...

Name: _____ Class: _____

Task 2: Response to Reading:
“Are High School Sports Good for Kids?”, by Daniel Gould, PH.D.

The author of this article makes points on both sides of this issue. Fill in the table below to provide at least one reason and piece of evidence that the author offers on each side of the argument. Then write to answer the question: which evidence is stronger and why?

High School Sports Are Good for Kids	High School Sports Are Not Good for Kids
<u>Reason:</u> 	<u>Reason:</u>
<u>Evidence:</u> 	<u>Evidence:</u>

Which evidence from this article is the strongest? What makes this evidence convincing?

Name: _____ Class: _____

Task 3: (use loose leaf paper for this)

Argument Essay:

Imagine that your school district is going to make a decision about continuing to fund sports programs in the schools. You have a chance to write an argument essay that will be read to the mayor, printed in the paper, or presented to the head of the school board or PTA. Your letter should state a position or claim by taking a clear side, back it up with research, and refute the other side. Thinking about all you've learned about this issue in the past couple of days, your job is to argue whether, overall, sports are more helpful or harmful for young people. Use what you know about argument essay writing to structure your writing.

In your essay, remember to:

- Quickly make a plan to organize your argument and your evidence
- Introduce your topic
- Take a position: make clear what you are arguing for or against
- Organize your reasons and supporting details in paragraphs
- Use relevant information from the sources you studied to support your claim
- Acknowledge and refute the counterclaim
- Include direct quotes from sources
- Maintain an essayist's tone
- Use transitional words and phrases
- Write a conclusion

Plan for essay:

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Name: _____ Class: _____

Reading Response:

“High School, College Football Comes with Risk”

The author of this article presents the risks for young people playing football along with some benefits. Fill in the table below to provide at least one reason and piece of evidence that the author offers on each side of the issue. Then write to answer the question: which evidence is stronger and why?

There are serious risks for young people who play football.	However, young people shouldn't stop playing football.
<u>Reason:</u>	<u>Reason:</u>
<u>Evidence:</u>	<u>Evidence:</u>

Which evidence from this article is the strongest? What makes this evidence convincing?

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: Eighth Grade Informational Reading/Argument Writing Performance Assessment Rubric

Reading Rubric Scoring Guide:

You may decide to score all of the responses to texts (Task 1 and Task 2). If so, average the score points for a final reading score. You may decide to score only the response to the last text (Task 2). If so, use the score for this response as a final reading score. In a post-assessment, use the same approach to achieve comparable results.

8th Reading Rubric	Level 1- Novice	1.5	Level 2- Developing	2.5	Level 3- Effective	3.5	Level 4 Highly Effective
R. Standard 8.1							
Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.							
	Attempts to refer to source material; demonstrates misunderstanding of the source material or questions. Or provides very little or no text evidence across all responses.		Refers to textual evidence from source(s), demonstrating mostly accurate comprehension of the source material. Most of the evidence is clearly relevant to the prompt. Provides some analysis of how the evidence supports an idea in the text.		Cites relevant pieces of textual evidence, demonstrating a selective and critical reading of the source material. Explains why the selected evidence strongly supports a claim in the text. Cites a combination of explicit and implicit evidence.		Cites the strongest textual evidence from the source material, demonstrating selective and critical reading. Offers somewhat elaborated analysis of explicit and implicit evidence from the text. Demonstrates a critical lens, analyzing not only the evidence itself, but also how that evidence is presented and the effect of that authorial choice.

8th Writing Rubric	Level 1- Novice	1.5	Level 2- Developing	2.5	Level 3- Effective	3.5	Level 4 Highly Effective
W. Standard 8.1							
Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.							
Position	Attempts to take a position on a topic; the position is either unclear or disconnected from the topic. Does not refer to alternate or opposing claims.		Takes a position on a topic that may waiver at times, especially when presenting possible counter-claims. Mentions a possible alternate position or counter-claim.		Takes a clear position on a topic. Discusses counter-claim(s), demonstrating to the reader that the chosen position is based on more authoritative evidence than alternate positions.		Establishes a credible and generally convincing position on a topic. Acknowledges counter-claim(s) and associated evidence, while making clear the relative strength of the stated position.

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: Eighth Grade Informational Reading/Argument Writing Performance Assessment Rubric

8th Writing Rubric	<u>Level 1- Novice</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>Level 2- Developing</u>	<u>2.5</u>	<u>Level 3- Effective</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>Level 4 Highly Effective</u>
W. Standard 8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.							
Structure: Introduces topic; Provides a concluding statement	Jumps directly into making a claim or discussing evidence without an introduction to the topic. Provides a conclusion that does not connect to the central claim or ends the piece without a concluding section.		Introduces the topic: the introduction may be too brief or distract from the central claim of the rest of the piece. In a concluding statement, confirms the writer’s chosen position on the topic.		Offers a thoughtful introduction to the topic: provides an overview, but also clearly sets up the writer’s stated position. In a concluding statement, reviews the larger argument, including opposing views, but highlights evidence that supports the writer’s position.		Provides an accurate and insightful introduction to the topic, offering necessary context for the reader along with angled evidence pointing to a position. In a concluding statement, demonstrates an understanding of the heart of the argument: presents the reader with insight into why the position on this topic matters.
Structure: Creates an organizational structure	Shows little overall organization or planning of the flow of the argument.		Creates an organizing structure, but that structure breaks down at times. The organization of reasons and evidence lacks consistency or purpose.		Organizes the essay to clearly demonstrate the strength of the writer’s position. Orders the supporting paragraphs and related evidence so that the counter-argument does not distract.		There is purposeful organization within each part of the essay, including the order of lines of thinking (including citations and acknowledgement of other views), and the placement of all evidence.
Structure: Transitions	Lacks transitional phrases or uses only lowest level transitions such as “also”.		Uses some transitional phrases to help the reader understand the writer’s position versus the counter-argument(s).		Makes clear transitions between lines of thinking – position and counter-argument; and between pieces of evidence and the analysis of that evidence.		Uses transitions which make clear the relationship of cited sources to each other and to the writer’s own claim. Uses phrases such as <i>in accordance with, in conjunction with, similar to, by contrast.</i>

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: Eighth Grade Informational Reading/Argument Writing Performance Assessment Rubric

8th Writing Rubric	<u>Level 1- Novice</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>Level 2- Developing</u>	<u>2.5</u>	<u>Level 3- Effective</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>Level 4 Highly Effective</u>
W. Standard 8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.							
Development: Elaboration	Includes almost no evidence or only includes evidence based on personal experience or unverified sources. Does not make connections from evidence to central claim, or attempts connections that do not make sense.		Includes mostly information from authoritative sources rather than evidence based on personal experience. Explains some details and examples and offers some analysis of their support for the position the writer has taken up; or in the case of counter-argument, why this evidence, or its source, is not convincing.		Includes valid and diverse sources and attempts to analyze the relevance and validity of these sources, including how they persuade their audience. Includes evidence supporting the writer’s and other positions; writes to explain the relative strengths and weaknesses of this evidence.		Provides sufficient sources and evidence to fully support the stated position. Analyzes the relevance and validity of sources for and against the stated position.
Language Conventions	Attempts to use standard English conventions, but errors in usage get in the way of the reader’s understanding. Does not cite sources. Writes in an informal tone throughout.		Demonstrates some command of standard English conventions, making some errors. Inconsistently cites sources. The writer’s tone is mostly formal.		Uses mostly accurate citation, and uses punctuation to clarify and emphasize quotations and to enhance meaning. The writer maintains an academic tone.		Cites sources using appropriate format with only minor errors. Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Uses language and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose.
R. Standard 8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.							
Development: Reading/Research	Attempts to refer to source material; demonstrates misunderstanding of the source material or consistently inappropriate placement of that material within the writer’s argument.		Refers to textual evidence from source(s), demonstrating mostly accurate comprehension of the source material. Some evidence seems out of place within the writer’s argument or is not explained.		Mostly cites strong pieces of textual evidence, demonstrating a selective and critical reading of the source material. Explains why the selected evidence strongly supports the writer’s chosen position; and why alternate evidence is not convincing.		Cites the strongest textual evidence from the source material, demonstrating selective and critical reading. Offers somewhat elaborated analysis of explicit and implicit messages from the source texts as a support for the argument.

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: Eighth Grade Informational Reading/Argument Writing Performance Assessment Rubric

Writing Rubric Scoring Guide – for scoring Task 3:

- Circle the descriptor in each row that best describes the student’s work in this category. If the work falls between two descriptors, check a mid-point box to indicate this. Use the scoring box to the right of the table to record the score for each category.
- For the category “Development: Elaboration,” double the points and record in the box to the right, as indicated by the “x 2.” This is because elaboration counts more towards the overall success of the piece than other individual categories.

Finding an overall Reading/Writing Scaled Score:

- Add the total points from the reading and writing rubrics to come up with a raw score. Use the following table to calculate a scaled score:

Total Points	Scaled Score
1-9	1
9.5-13.5	1.5
14-18	2
18.5-22.5	2.5
23-27	3
27.5-31.5	3.5
32-36	4

- To look closely at growth between pre- and post-assessments, keep this rubric with the circled descriptors.
- **You will want to track growth across sub-sections, not just in the scaled score.**

What in the Name of High School Football? By Hank Hill
Literary Cavalcade, Nov/Dec2002, Vol. 55, Issue 3

My high school is an *athletocracy*. Sports are well-celebrated. The arts and academics are simply tolerated. Football players are princes; artists are stepchildren. The hockey team walks on water. Musicians just walk. My yardstick is a glance at the amount of community recognition and resources dedicated to each.

Don't get me wrong. Our high school has one of the strongest academic and arts programs. Our artists and musicians consistently win awards when matched against their greater statewide peers. Our scholars are many and perform admirably on a wide array of Advanced Placement courses and national tests. But you would hardly know it.

With Martha's Vineyard Regional High (MVRHS) sports, win or lose, you cannot escape the news. The deaf can almost hear the cheers. The blind would tire at the week-after-week, above-the-fold, page-one photos of ball-catching/throwing/whacking. The local cable television channel repeats both the JV and Varsity football games a half dozen times a week. Ditto for field hockey and soccer. The advertising banners on that same channel flash accolades for sports teams from local businesses 24 hours a day.

Each Friday before football games, the school is decorated with banners and streamers and mug shots of football players. And on autumn Mondays, the heroes (as defined by catching a TD pass or two) are again up on the walls as icons. Winter and spring have a new cast of poster boys.

Yet only a few weeks ago, 16 MVRHS vocalists and instrumentalists auditioned for the competitive All Cape & Islands music festival. And the judges selected a remarkable 16 of 16. Unheard of success. And yet not a mention in the local papers. Not a word on the radio. Not a sentence in the principal's address. Not a squeak on the morning announcements. Not a face on the wall.

The gift of music came wrapped in silence.

The only recognition was a list of names taped to the music-room door and a story I jammed in as editor of the school newspaper. Imagine the hoopla if the entire starting offense plus defensive backfield of the football team (that's 16 give or take the particular defense) were selected as All-Cape League All-Stars. A parade down Main Street with fire engine sirens blaring would only begin the excess.

Again do not misunderstand me. I am not against athletics. The single greatest factor in preventing the nation's number one killer – heart disease – is regular and vigorous exercise, and that gets my vote. In junior high school I played baseball and lacrosse and loved it. Fenway Park, the Boston Red Sox's baseball stadium, is among my favorite places on earth. I am against the unfair and lopsided allocation of community resources to varsity sports that benefit one select group of students over another. I believe colleges are even-handed when slicing the pie. Not MVRHS.

Our school will shell out \$26,000 this winter alone to pay for ice time for the hockey teams. That's before even a dollar is spent on coaches, insurance, transportation, and equipment. At the end of the season, that \$26,000 will literally be water vapor. The drama department limps along without even a decent set of body microphones for productions which include 50 students at a time. Two Advanced Placement English seminars were compressed into one unwieldy class this year as a cost-cutting measure. And the hockey players skate on \$26,000 that by March will evaporate into thin air.

The athletic program at MVRHS has become almost a religion. The administration openly concedes that our mostly sleep-deprived student body – many of whom catch a 6:20 a.m. school bus – is the result of a forced homage to sports. The school day must start that early so athletes who travel off the Vineyard for away games limit their missed classes. The result of this catering to sports is bleary-eyed students and an overall depression of academic performance for everyone. This is an accepted cost of athletics. Absurd.

Without even addressing the actual “value” of competitive athletics or the arts, consider just the numbers: Band, orchestra and jazz have a total of about 120 kids times *three full seasons* of participation in my school. Freshman chorus, mixed-chorus, and Minnesingers (vocal performing group) have at least an equal number times *three seasons*. Yet the music students have to fight for a group lesson while the sports training programs rival that of an NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Division I team.

Meanwhile, an educational crisis is looming. As more and more master teachers retire, MVRHS cannot find veteran replacements – the cost of buying a home here is unaffordable for most teachers. Last year, an advertised math position drew only a single applicant.

Yet instead of taking the lead from our sister island, Nantucket, which has followed the example of the best private schools by building teacher housing on school property, MVRHS is poised to bulldoze the last, prized acres of undeveloped school land and expand the athletic fields even further at huge expense.

Good teachers benefit all students. Varsity sports only benefit some.

I am not suggesting eliminating or even cutting down any MVRHS sports programs. Not at all. I am simply stating that to *expand* an already large athletic department is, by definition, at the *expense* of the arts and academics. It's time the Martha's Vineyard *athletocracy* take the perennial advice of all wrestling coaches: Time to go on a little diet.

Are High School Sports Good For Kids?

By Daniel Gould, Ph.D.

Director, Institute for the Study of Youth Sports

(<http://www.educ.msu.edu/ysi/parents/FAQ/askexperts2.htm>)

High school sports are an integral part of the fabric of Americans society with over 5 million youth participating in any school year. Here in Michigan almost 300,000 young people take part in high school sports every year. Moreover, school sports are justified because of their potential educational benefits. For example, the mission statement of the National Federation of State High School Activity Associations indicates that it promotes “participation and sportsmanship” in an effort to “develop good citizens through interscholastic activities which provide equitable opportunities, positive recognition and learning experiences to students while maximizing the achievement of educational goals.”

Not only are school sports justified on educational grounds, but researchers have shown that participation in them and other extracurricular activities have positive effects on adolescents. For example, a multiyear study conducted in Michigan has shown that children who participate in sports have increased educational aspirations, closer ties to school and increased occupational aspirations in youth. It has been demonstrated, then, that school sports participation has a number of desirable benefits.

This does not mean, however, that school sports are not without problems. An overemphasis on winning, year-round single sport participation, and difficulties finding qualified coaches are but a few of concerns facing leaders in the area. The over-emphasis on winning issue is especially significant as when this occurs the educational objectives for involvement are often forgotten.

And while principals, athletic directors, and coaches have the ultimate responsibility for keeping winning in the proper perspective and must be held accountable for their actions, let’s not place all the blame on them. The general public, parents and society is placing more emphasis on winning than ever before which, at times, pressures athletic personnel to deviate from the athlete-centered educational and personal development mission. We cannot let this happen. The educational objectives of high school sports must be recognized and placed in the forefront.

This does not imply that winning is unimportant and should not be emphasized at all. Leading youth development experts contend that one of the potential benefits of sports participation is the development of initiative or the ability to set and go after goals, which is part of the competitive process. Moreover, in a recent Institute for the Study of Youth Sports investigation of outstanding high school coaches who were recognized for the character and citizenship building contributions to players we found that these individuals were highly successful (winning over 70% of their games). They stressed winning, but never put winning before the personal and educational development of their players. Instead, they maintained a strong

educational philosophy and did not just talk about building character in their players, but took daily actions to do so while at the same time pursuing excellence. The bottom line is that high school sports are still a highly desirable activity for students to participate in and should be supported for their educational benefits. However, we as taxpayers and proponents of positive youth development must insist that their educational objectives always come first. We cannot knowingly or unknowingly let winning become the only goal and must support school district, athletic director and coach efforts to always put the education and development of the student-athlete first.

High School, College Football Comes With Risk

By Jeffrey Perkel

HealthDay Reporter – ABC News

THURSDAY, July 26 (HealthDay News) – With the school football season just around the corner, a new study is raising awareness of the risks associated with playing the game.

Researchers found that college football players get injured more often than their high school counterparts, but high school athletes are more likely to end up severely injured.

The new findings also point to "where the focus should be in terms of prevention," said Dr. Cynthia LaBella, medical director of the Institute for Sports Medicine at Children's Memorial Hospital, in Chicago. She was not involved in the study, which is published in the August issue of the *American Journal of Sports Medicine*.

A second report on youth sports injuries was also released Thursday, this time by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That study, published in this week's issue of *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, found that boys aged 10 to 14 were most likely to end up in the nation's emergency departments with a traumatic brain injury, and that activities such as bicycling, horseback riding, football, basketball and use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) were most often to blame.

The football study was led by R. Dawn Comstock, a primary investigator at the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. Her team collected injury reports for the 2005-2006 football season from 100 high schools and 55 colleges across the country via two Internet-based systems -- the High School Reporting Information Online (RIO) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Injury Surveillance System, respectively.

Based on almost 1,900 injury reports submitted to the RIO, the researchers estimate there were 517,726 football-related injuries during the 2005-2006 season at the high school level across the United States. The NCAA system logged more than 3,500 injuries in its database during the same period.

Not unexpectedly, college players were about twice as likely to injure themselves as high school students, Comstock said, suffering 8.6 injuries per 1,000 "athlete-exposures" (a practice or competition), compared with high school athletes' 4.36 injuries/1,000.

But the researcher said she was surprised to find that the distribution of injuries differed, with fractures, concussions, and season-ending injuries more common among high school athletes.

For instance, injuries to the lower leg, ankle and foot were common at both the high school and college levels. But while the knee is the second most-injured site among high school players, hip and thigh injuries were more common in college athletes.

The study comes on the heels of findings released in July that found a much higher rate of catastrophic head injury among high school football players compared to college players.

LaBella noted that, if anything, this study is underestimating injuries at the high school level, because only schools with an athletic trainer on staff were included. It's possible that such schools have better resources and equipment than less well-funded schools, she said.

According to Comstock, the impetus behind this study was the lack of any injury reporting system at the high school level to match the NCAA's, which has been in place for more than 20 years.