The History of Football Helmets by Latelle Smith

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In 1893 Admiral Joseph Mason Reeves was told by his doctor that if he didnâ€™t want to risk insanity or death he should wear something to protect himself while playing football. He went to a shoemaker and had a headgear designed for him to protect him in case he gets hurt again. George Barclay took it a step further in 1896 and had a protective headgear made for him by a harness maker. It had three leather straps that was designed to protect the ears and looked like the headgear that wrestlers wear today. Between 1920 and 1940 the helmets were made out of leather. The leather helmets were extremely flimsy that protected only the ears with no face mask and was frequently mistaken for caps. Since no holes were made it made communication very difficult on the field and was very uncomfortable to wear. As time went on more padding and cushioningâ€™s were added to protect from injury on the field.

In the 1930â€™s helmets were only worn if you wanted to. Since it was not mandatory not everyone had one. During games you would sometimes have half of the players wearing one while the other half did not. It wasnâ€™t until the 1940â€™s that the NFL made it mandatory for everyone to wear a helmet however even then no face masks were used. In 1955 the NFL required for all its players to wear face masks in order to protect them from facial injuries. A. big breakthrough came in 1938 when Riddell opened its door in Chicago, llinois and started manufacturing football helmets with hard plastic which protected from injury when tackled. Today the helmets are made of polycarbonate which is a strong plastic that is designed to protect the player from any blows to the head.

The helmets in the 1930â€™s were pretty plain and looked all the same making it difficult to differentiate between teams. Most of the teams would simply paint their logos or team colors alone onto the helmet in order to promote their team. The Los Angeles Rams was the first team to print their logo onto their helmets in 1948 making it officially their team helmet. The other teams quickly followed and before long every team had their logos and colors printed onto their helmets. The helmets became a collectorâ€™s favorite in the 1970â€™s when everyone started buying their favorite teams helmets. It quickly became a favorite and was officially turned into a souvenir for all football fans. Today you can even buy the mini helmets that is sold everywhere where sports memorabilia is sold. Some fans have taken it a step further by having their favorite players autograph their helmets.

In the past 100 years football safety has come a long way in order to protect players from injury. However it has not stopped and more research is constantly being done in order to make the game safer and more enjoyable for all. In the meantime enjoy the game and appreciate that you can play it safely.

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