

Texas High School Football Mandates Tackling Certification for All High School Coaches

Texas High School Coaches Association and the University Interscholastic League select Atavus Sports to lead the first-of-its-kind statewide tackling certification.

AUSTIN, TEXAS — March 20, 2018 — The University Interscholastic League (UIL) and the Texas High School Coaches Association (THSCA) have worked collaboratively to take an unprecedented step forward to make football a safer sport. In October 2017, the UIL Legislative Council passed a rule requiring every Texas high school and junior high school football coach to become certified in teaching tackling as a part of the official UIL Coaches Certification Program beginning with the 2018-19 school year.

With this new measure, UIL has made Texas the first in the country to implement a mandatory statewide tackling certification program for all football coaches. In a joint effort between UIL and THSCA to raise standards and improve safety, Atavus Sports was selected as the exclusive provider to oversee and administer the certification process statewide. Atavus Sports is a Seattle-based organization focused on tackling techniques and tackle data analytics. The primary objective of this collaboration is to enhance Texas High School football by providing best practices in tackling training for all football coaches and keeping athletes who play the game safer.

“The UIL Legislative Council was overwhelmingly in favor of supporting this measure,” said Dr. Charles Breithaupt, Executive Director of the University Interscholastic League. “We view the addition of a mandatory tackling certification for football coaches as a positive educational extension that will ultimately improve the game and the welfare of our students.”

“The game is changing, and we have to be willing to change with it,” said D.W. Rutledge, Executive Director of the Texas High School Coaches Association. “By implementing a mandatory tackling certification, we’re continuing our legacy in Texas as leaders in high school football and taking necessary steps to move the game forward. Preventing injuries is paramount for all coaches and players, and we felt that as an organization it was our duty to seek out the best possible solutions to keeping our players safe.”

The certification process for coaches begins in July 2018 and will be available in two formats. The first option is an on-site training offered by THSCA, consisting of a presentation followed by a live assessment that must be passed to receive certification. The second option, available beginning April 1, 2019, is an online platform, which allows coaches to achieve certification at their own pace but consists of a similar educational presentation and final assessment.

“Being from Texas and a former football coach in the state, this means a lot to me,” said Rex Norris, Head of Football for Atavus Sports. “A dominant tackle is a safer tackle, and we are excited to get to work

helping coaches teach tackling techniques that will benefit their players and improve their team's performance."

Atavus has spent the past five years educating coaches and players of all skill levels, working with elite college football programs across the country such as Michigan State University, Rutgers University, The University of Washington, Ohio State University, The University of Nebraska and more. At the high school level in Texas, Atavus has worked with a number of schools, including Sulphur Springs, Waxahachie, Rockwall, Westbrook and Brownwood high schools, as well as a long list of other schools across the U.S.

"We know that Texas is widely regarded as the pinnacle of high school football," said Karen Bryant, CEO of Atavus Sports. "We're thrilled they have decided to take action and lead the way in recognizing that tackling is an important part of the game. We certainly hope that other states follow Texas's lead and implement similar certification processes in their organizations."

###

About Atavus Sports

Headquartered in Seattle, Atavus Sports aims to provide a modern, impactful solution for coaches at all levels of football to improve performance and safety in tackling. Atavus has developed the first and most comprehensive system rooted in technique and fundamentals using innovative, detailed analytics. Atavus measures performance and offers consulting services to provide coaches on-site and remote assessment, coupled with specific tackle plans backed by advanced technology.

About The University Interscholastic League

The University Interscholastic League was created by The University of Texas at Austin to provide leadership and guidance to public school debate and athletic teachers. Since 1910 the UIL has grown into the largest inter-school organization of its kind in the world. The UIL continues to operate as part of the University of Texas, under the auspices of the Vice President for Diversity & Community Engagement. The UIL exists to provide educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests. The initials UIL have come to represent quality educational competition administered by school people on an equitable basis.

About Texas High School Coaches Association

The Texas High School Coaches Association (THSCA) is the principle advocate and leadership organization for Texas high school coaches. THSCA provides the highest quality representation, education, and services to Texas high school coaches and affiliate members and enhances the professionalism of coaches and the schools they represent. Our mission statement is simply this: To help and serve our Texas high school coaches as they work to help and serve our student athletes. "HELPING COACHES TO HELP KIDS."

Media Contacts

Laura Faragalli / Lorne Richmond

Richmond Public Relations / (206) 682-6979

lauraf@richmondpr.com / lorner@richmondpr.com

www.Atavus.com