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'Guardian Caps' reduce danger of concussions when worn on football helmets

Johns Creek couple donating them to schools, selling them on website

by Matthew Quinn

write the author

November 23, 2011
ALPHARETTA, Ga.—A Johns Creek couple is marketing an invention intended to protect football players from concussions by augmenting their helmets.



Erin and Lee Hanson took the concept of the ProCap and created the more flexible Guardian Cap to help prevent concussions among football players. MATTHEW W. QUINN/Staff. (click for larger version)

Lee and Erin Hanson both own the Hanson Group, while Erin owns POC Ventures, which produces the Guardian Cap.

Lee said other companies come to the Hanson Group to ask for help making a product. Erin said the companies want certain physical properties in the product and Hanson Group, with its focus on material science, fits the bill.

That is what brought Bert Straus of Protective Sporting Equipment, who invented the ProCap, to the Hanson Group. The ProCap fits on the outside of the football helmet, but Lee said it looked like the helmet of the "Flintstones" character the Great Gazoo. The Hanson Group worked with 15-20 medical doctors, including neurologists, biomedical engineers and physicists, to create an alternative product that fills the same role. POC—which stands for Protect Our Children—was formed to market the caps, as it is the Hanson Group's first foray into creating a product themselves.

Erin said concussions happen when the head is moving forward and gets stopped too quickly.

"The science behind it is stopping that sudden deceleration," she said.

The Guardian Cap is flexible and fits around a football helmet. It has a 90 percent "give," as opposed to the 10 percent "give" of the padding inside a conventional football helmet. The cap is made of several different types of material, including energy-absorbing polyurethane elastomer. The skin is made of a material similar to Lycra and spandex, which has a low coefficient of friction. The surface is channeled to dissipate the energy of an impact. It doesn't absorb water and weighs a third of a pound.

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which is so near our children. The warm environment here brings our family in almost every day! The food is delicious, and we justify the big meals through our involvement in the daily exercise class. We also enjoy singing along with various church groups who visit weekly, socializing on the front porch with residents and staff, and viewing acts from special performances including Elvis!



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Testing the product shows a 35 percent decrease in severity of an impact.

"Concussions are going to happen in football," she said. "But you can lessen the blow."

Lee said the focus is to use the Guardian Cap during practices, which is when 90 percent of the concussions occur. Players who wear the cap will not be hurt during practice and will be able to participate in the game.

"This year, we've given away 600 of these to teams all across the country to try out," he said.

The company wanted to have field experience with high school and youth teams. Out of the 600, not one has been returned.

"We've all heard rave reviews from all the kids and coaches," he said.

The company will focus on 2012 spring training and summer practice.

Although the caps are available for purchase on the website, Erin said the company is still putting together its sales plan. So far, word of mouth is what has gotten the caps into the hands of the football teams using it. One idea is to pitch the product directly to coaches, athletic directors and school booster clubs. Each cap costs \$70, although if bought in bulk, they will go for \$45 each.

The cap is manufactured at a company facility in Colorado. Erin said she hopes to move the manufacturing process to Georgia, but the final decision has not been made.

Jeff Pickren, head football coach at King's Ridge Christian School in Alpharetta, learned about the Hansons' project from a mutual friend.

"The Hansons have been very generous and donated the caps for us," he said.

The football season is over now and the students who have used the caps liked them due to their light weight. He said there were no concussions during the season, although it is hard to assign that to the caps.

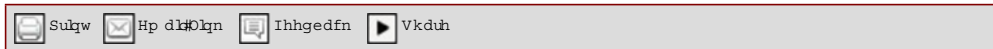
"It was another way of making the kids safer, and we were willing to do it," he said.

The school plans on using the caps next year. Students who have already had concussions will definitely be using them.

Those interested in finding out more information about the product can visit www.guardiancaps.com.

[View images.](#)

Editor, Johns Creek Herald



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November 24, 2011 | 01:27 PM

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<http://sciencewitness.com/2011/11/14/concussion-discussion-iii-the-impact-indicator/>

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