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### **Introduction**

According to a study done by the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, there were 13 injuries per every 1,000 football player appearances in practice or games. This was more than triple the likelihood of injuries compared to the other 18 sports studied (USA Today, 2010). This study alone highlights the inherent risks which athletes could encounter from playing football. The severe injuries which occur from violent head to head collusions have recently caused uproar in the National Football League.

The game of football has been around since as early as 2500 BCE in Ancient China, but there is no clear-cut evidence as to when and where the first football game took place (Britannica Encyclopedia). The game of football, which is prevalent amongst our society today, is much different in regards to the game that took place in early 2500 BCE. The sport has evolved tremendously with time to say the least. Football reached America in the early 1890's, but did not become a major sport until after World War II (Britannica Encyclopedia). Although College Football took off in 1876, it wasn't until 1922 for the National Football League to form under the direction of Jim Thorpe, who also participated in the National Football League. With College Football beginning before the National Football League, it was quite difficult for the National Football League to gain credibility. At the time people favored College Football because that was the norm, it had been around for a longer period of time, and was the only form of football people were accustomed too. With that being said the rivalries and competition between the different college football teams had already been established, so people already had their personal teams in which they root for. It wasn't until 1950 when

College Football took a back seat to the NFL. The reason for this was the invention of television, which allowed the NFL games to be broadcast on a national level (Britannica Encyclopedia).

While the safety of the players is a major cause for concern today, this wasn't the case in the beginning stages of the sport. Due to the relatively newness of the sport people didn't realize the dangerous consequences which could occur from the violence of the sport. It wasn't until the Chicago Tribune reported a scary statistic in 1905, for the president of the United States Theodore Roosevelt to make a stand. The Chicago Tribune reported that 18 football players were dead and 159 were seriously injured. Roosevelt responded to this news by saying, "I demand that football change its rules or be abolished. Brutality and foul play should receive the same summary punishment given to a man who cheats at cards! Change the game or forsake it!" (American Football, Stewart).

The use of protective equipment has come along way in the sport of football. This is exemplified in the evolution of the football helmet, often considered the most important piece of equipment worn by football players. In the early stages of football helmets were considered unnecessary, and were seen as taking away from the toughness of the sport. According to Pudge Heffelfinger a three time All-American in football from 1889-1891 at Yale, "None of that sissy for me. I just let my hair grow long and pulled it through a turtleneck sweater" (American Football, Stewart). This was the view amongst football players in the early beginnings of the sport in regards to the use of a helmet.

The first initial use of a helmet occurred in 1893 at this time helmets were not required to be worn by players, but a player by the name of Joseph M. Reeves from the

Naval Academy decided he would give it a try in hopes to avoid more head injuries.

Joseph went to a local shoemaker and had him make a cap out of moleskin, which would cover his head and ears. While at the time this seemed like a minor issue, this marked the birth of the American football helmet (American Football, Stewart). This particular choice by Reeves allowed the sport to move in a positive direction, in hopes to decrease the amount of head injuries.

After Reeves football players George Barclay, Bob Zuppke, and Indiana sporting goods retailer Vern McMillan helped in the innovation of the helmet. In 1896 Barclay was worried about getting cauliflower ears, so he had a helmet designed which consisted of three leather straps, which went over his head and covered his ears. In 1917 Zuppke brought forth the idea that there should be a layer of leather inside the helmet, which allowed for space and extra padding inside the helmet helping players absorb blows to the head. McMillan introduced the facemask in the early 1930's, which lead to the evolution of the helmet seen today. The helmet became a mandatory piece of equipment in 1939, and this also marked the year of the first plastic helmets produced (College Football Helmet, Miller).

Since the year 2007 there has been an increased concern in football related injuries; more specifically head injuries. The reason for this is because of an increasingly growing number of serious head injuries throughout the game of football. The most common head injury, which occurs, is a concussion. "A concussion is a brain injury that is caused by a sudden blow to the head or to the body. The blow shakes the brain inside the skull, which temporarily prevents the brain from working normally" (WebMd). In order to decrease the number of concussions and head injuries the National Football

League put a ban on helmet-to-helmet hits on defenseless players. A defenseless player would include any player who is unable to protect themselves at that point in time (Nfl.com).

At this time the National Football League Officials and the National Football League players are in a dispute over the recent increased safety measures. Although no rules were changed, the increased penalties which players could face is the big cause for concern. On October 18, 2010, the Commissioner of the National Football League, Roger Goodell, issued a statement to his players and coaches, which informed them that players could be fined an increased amount of money, and even face suspension if they perform an illegal helmet to helmet hit on a defenseless player (Belson).

The NFL officials insist the reason for this increase in punishment is due to the safety of the players. The NFL is trying to make the game as safe as possible, while not taking away from the actual game itself. The NFL officials acknowledge that they understand football is a violent sport, so they want to do everything in their power to prevent as many injuries as possible. On the other hand the NFL players feel as if these new punishments will take away from the tradition and authenticity of the game. Most players feel that this will change the way they play the game because they either, do not want to pay 75,000 dollars to the Commissioner's office, or their team would be at a severe disadvantage if they were suspended for a game. Players also insist that no one is forcing them to play the sport, each individual player knows the dangers of the sport. A common theme amongst the players is if the game is too violent they would not have signed up to play the sport as a young adult.

Although many people have written about football and sports in general, this particular issue has yet to be examined. The reason for this is because the National Football League just recently chose to start looking into the safety hazards of helmet-to-helmet collisions. As stated earlier this particular increase in penalties came into effect October 18, 2010. The topic at hand will bring forth new points of interests, which have not been examined, in regards to the rhetoric being used by the NFL Players and NFL officials. This artifact will highlight the different uses of rhetoric in sports, and more importantly the National Football League. This is particularly important because it shows that rhetoric plays an influential role in the sporting world. The NFL players and NFL officials are using rhetoric in order to support their ideas and differing viewpoints in this particular artifact.

The dispute between the NFL players and NFL officials revolves around two different ideologies, which use rhetoric in order to persuade one another. According to Michael Butterworth, "As a rhetorical form, sport is illustrative of what Charland (1987) terms constitutive rhetoric, because it is a site in which audiences, ideas, and arguments are invented and defined through dramatic contests" (Butterworth, 263). This is the exact case with the NFL dispute at hand; the increased amount of head injuries during dramatic contests, led to an invention of an argument from the players in regards to the new rules brought forth. This artifact allows us to examine the ways in which rhetoric is used to influence competing ideologies.

By looking at the rhetoric presented in this artifact one will be able to discover the motivating factors of the NFL officials, and NFL players in regards to the increase safety

measures regarding helmet-to-helmet hits. This proves to be significantly important because sports play a huge role in our society today. Unpacking the elements within the artifact will bring forth the motivating factors, of both groups of people involved.

### Context

In this essay I will examine the ideologies formed in regards to the new helmet-tohelmet increased penalty rulings by the NFL. I will use an ideological criticism in order to write this paper. The two ideologies present include safety regulations, which is presented by the NFL officials, while the second one is tradition and authenticity, which is presented by the NFL players. Both groups use these ideologies in order to form their arguments around the issue. The research question, which I pose, is: How do competing ideologies use rhetoric to influence their position on this particular conflict of violence?

When taking a closer look at the artifact one can see that the dispute rests on an issue of Safety Regulations. In the artifact <safety> becomes an ideograph, which will be examined throughout the rest of the paper. The controversy surrounding the increased punishment for helmet-to-helmet hits is very subjective, which leads to the large uproar from the NFL Players. Current coach of the New England Patriots Bill Belichick said it best: "You just have to understand how the game is being officiated and what the calls mean — what's a block in the back, what isn't a block in the back; what's illegal contact, what isn't illegal contact, what's pass interference, what isn't pass interference, what's holding, what isn't holding. There are a lot of gray areas in all those calls, so we have to learn what those are and hope that the officials call them consistently from week to week, which, that's an issue, too" (Battista, New York Times). The big issue from the players

regarding the issue is how subjective the penalties are. There will be times when officials call a certain penalty, and other times officials would not call the penalty. The ruling of what is and is not a helmet-to-helmet collusion has a ton of grey area leaving a lot of room for interpretation. Take, for example, Pittsburg Steelers Linebacker James Harrison; he was issued a fine of 75,000 dollars from the NFL for a helmet-to-helmet hit, which was not called a penalty by the officials. The league officials stated that the officials missed the call (Battista, New York Times). With the subjective penalty calls by officials, and the debate over safety regulations, players and officials have been in controversy since commissioner Roger Goodell issued the increased safety measures on October 18, 2010.

When looking at the rhetoric from the NFL officials one can see that their particular viewpoints rest solely on the issue of the safety of the players. Commissioner Roger Goodell issued a statement to players and coaches on October 18, 2010, in regards to the increased penalty for players who perform these illegal helmet-to-helmet hits. In this league wide- statement Goodell notes, "One of our highest priorities is player safety. We all know that football is a tough game that includes hard contact. But that carries with it an obligation to do all that we can to protect all players from unnecessary injury caused by dangerous techniques from those who play outside the rules" (Kirkendall). He also stated that, "Violations of the playing rules that unreasonably put the safety of another player in jeopardy have no place in the game, and that is especially true in the case of hits to the head and neck" (Kirkendall). Although the increase in discipline for players who perform these illegal hits seems a little harsh, the NFL has begun making safety an even

bigger issue the past couple of years. According to a study by Mild Tramatic Brain Injury Committee, after a 12- year- long study of the NFL, the average number of days which players sat out after a concussion more than doubled when comparing 1996-2001 and 2002 to 2007 (Health Day News). From this study one can see that concussions are becoming a major cause for concern for NFL officials. The NFL officials are beginning to realize the seriousness of the issue, and are trying to take the necessary actions in order to make the game as safe as possible for the players.

Now when looking at the rhetoric from the NFL players one can see that the players feel as if the increased discipline will take away from the tradition and authenticity of the game. A recent quote from Chicago Bears middle linebacker Brian Urlacher suggested that the league be called the "National Flag Football League." Also, Miami Dolphins Linebacker Channing Crowder said, "If I get a chance to knock somebody out, I'm going to knock them out and take what they give me, they give me a helmet, I'm going to use it" (Myers, NY Daily News). All of these quotes suggest that the players are more than displeased with the increase in discipline. Some players have even gone as far as saying they may have to retire, because the recent increase in discipline might take away from their ability to be effective in the National Football League. This was the case for Pittsburg Steelers Defensive Lineman James Harrison, who said he needed to talk to his head coach "And see if I can actually play by the NFL rules and still be effective. If not, I may have to give up playing football" (Myers, NY Daily News).

The recent quotes by the NFL Players exemplify their disapproval with the increased discipline. The NFL Players have a strong belief that the way the game is right

now is the way it should be played. They feel there is no need to change the authenticity and tradition of the game. Players such as Antrel Rolle and Keith Bullock claim they will not change the way in which they play, because this is how they have played the game their whole life. Mathias Kiwanuka of the New York Giants said, "Most guys do not intend to hit people with their helmets, it just happens and if you try to stop people from doing that you're going to take a lot of things out of the game. You might as well just have everybody tag off on the person with the ball" (Serby, NY Post).

The NFL coaches are being held accountable as well. With the new safety regulations NFL officials sent out a memo addressed to the NFL coaches informing them of how to teach safe tackling techniques. In the statement issued by commissioner Roger Goodell on October 18 2010, he stated, "Coaches are expected to teach playing within the rules. Failure to do so will subject both the coach and the employing club to discipline" (Kirkendall). Along with this memo was an instructional video showing what constituted a legal hit versus what constituted an illegal hit. This is a very interesting component to the artifact because coaches can now be punished if their players refuse to abide by the new regulations. NFL coaches have only so much control of what their players do on and off the field, and now the NFL is forcing them to teach these new techniques to their players. This new safety regulation forces coaches to agree with the harsh disciplinary actions, because they are now being held responsible for the actions of their players.

While this seems to be a great tactic used by NFL officials in order to get coaches on board with the new safety measures, but in reality NFL coaches have minimal control over the way a player plays the game. The players in the NFL have been participating in

football for many years, and during this time they have played the game a certain way. For the NFL officials to hold the coaches accountable for the way in which their players play the game is unfair. These players understand the dangerous consequences of the game, and do not step on the playing field intending to hurt another player. The fact of the matter is injuries are apart of the game, and in the end the players are the ones participating in the game the coaches can only do so much. A coach can instill these new techniques, but to change the way a player has played the game his whole life is a very difficult task to accomplish. This particular tactic used by NFL officials to hold coaches accountable will only end up making coaches more frustrated with the increased safety measures, because of the penalties that coaches will face due to their players actions on the field.

Clearly one can see the differing viewpoints between the different groups of people involved. On one hand you have the NFL officials who are enforcing the disciplinary actions in order to create a safer playing environment for the players. The NFL officials are concerned about the longevity of the players playing careers, and are afraid that without these new regulations years could be taken off player's lives. When looking at the player's point of view, they have the notion that the game is a violent sport and the new safety regulations will change the tradition and authenticity of the game. The players acknowledge that injuries are part of the game, and they understood these consequences when they agreed to play the game at a young age. The players have a view point which focuses on the immediate future, as opposed to the NFL officials who are thinking about the long term effects from the constant helmet to helmet hits in which NFL players endure.

### Method

When using an ideological criticism on a particular artifact one hopes to discover the beliefs and values in the particular artifact suggests. When dealing with ideological criticism the focus is on ideologies. An ideology is a pattern of beliefs that determines a group's interpretations of some aspects of the world (Foss, 209). Ideological criticism allows one to figure out how the ideology functions within the artifact. This will show how the artifact functions and reinforces the ideology, or it will allow one to argue and make a statement claiming the lack of reinforcement on the ideology by the artifact.

An ideological criticism consists of four basic steps, which will be used later on in the paper to analyze the rhetoric being used throughout the artifact. The first step is to identify a person or elements of the artifact. In this step one looks at what is initially observed on the surface. The second step is to identify the suggested elements linked to the presented elements. In this step one performs a deeper observation into the elements. The third step is when one formulates an ideology given the elements of the particular artifact. And finally the last step is to identify the functions served by the ideology.

The evolution of ideological criticism did not come from a single person, nor did it come from a single idea. Ideological criticism evolved from many different scholars, who all shared many different perspectives. French Revolutionaries first introduced ideology in regards to critical study of ideas. Naploean was known to contrast ideology with knowledge from his heart and lessons of history when annoyed with critics. Marx

also used the term stressing the connection between established economic interests and spiritual formulations (Wander, 78).

For the purpose of my paper I will highlight three scholars who helped bring ideological criticism to the surface. The first scholar is Philip Wander, who is most often known for bringing forth the "ideological turn" in rhetorical criticism. The second scholar I will highlight is Michael McGee, who is most known for his work in ideographic criticism, and for coming up with the term "ideograph." The third scholar I will highlight is Raymie McKerrow, who is most known for his work in critical rhetoric involving critiques of dominance and freedom.

In Philip Wander's piece titled, "Ideological Turn in Modern Criticism" he describes that the ideological turn is the notion that you are part of an ideology, yet unmasking and showing ethical and political dilemma is essential. He is concerned both with material reality and real world issues. Wander is a firm believer that ideological criticism is essential in determining the motivations of those who produce the rhetoric. Through the use of Wander's work one will be able to examine the different interpretations, which audiences will encounter through the use of rhetoric. This is highlighted in Wander's term called third persona; the audience neglected by the speaker. This can be seen within this particular artifact, because there is an enormous audience surrounding this artifact due to the popularity of the game of football. Although the rhetoric within the artifact is directed at two groups of people, a much larger audience will be affected by the rhetoric due to the media exposure surrounding the artifact.

When looking at Michael McGee and his piece titled, "The 'Ideograph': A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology," McGee brings forth the term "ideograph." An

ideograph is a word or words attached with an ideology, which help build ideology, and fulfill the ideological meaning (McGee, 500). McGee describes that the difference between ideograph and an ideology is the fact that ideographs appear in the text and discourse, while and ideology is an interpretation. Through this notion of an ideograph McGee uses Ideographic Criticism in order to examine how well the ideograph accomplished and served as the major word source behind the ideology. When looking at my artifact the issue of <safety> serves as a powerful ideograph throughout the artifact. I will use this in order to better understand the rhetoric being used, and determine the significance of this particular ideograph.

The final scholar I will highlight is Raymie McKerrow and his piece titled, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis." Throughout the piece McKerrow is concerned with truth, claiming that if one knows the absolute truth there is no need for rhetoric, because there is no need to persuade a particular audience or person (McKerrow, 97). He uses two critiques: a critique of freedom and a critique of domination. In his critique of freedom he finds a never-ending skepticism, the offered and suggested truth is constantly open to being critiqued and discussed. It is a way of double checking in order to reach the truth. In his critique of domination he finds unequal power relations which are not accepted. This can be seen as a parallel to feminist critique.

Mckerrow's critiques will allow me to unpack the rhetoric being used between the two competing ideologies presented in my artifact. I will use Mckerrow's critiques to determine whether or not the rhetoric being used by the NFL officials is legitimate. I will be able to determine whether or not NFL officials are truly concerned about the safety of

the NFL players, or if the rhetoric is being used in order to hold power over the NFL players. I will also use his critiques to find the truth behind the NFL player's rhetoric, as to whether or not they are truly concerned about the authenticity and tradition of the game. This will allow me to determine whether this is an issue of power relations, or the overall health of the NFL players.

# **Application Of Method**

For this first step I will identify the people and elements, which make up my artifact. In this artifact two groups of people are present. The first group includes the National Football League Officials who are imposing increased punishment for helmetto-helmet contact on defenseless players. A key element identified by this particular group of people is the safety of the player's throughout the NFL. This can be seen in the official press release from the commissioner of the NFL Roger Goodell addressed to the entire league. In this press release Ray Anderson the NFL's executive vice president of football operations states, "We've got to get the message to players that these devastating hits and head shots will be met with a very necessary higher standard of accountability. We have to dispel the notion that you get one free pass in these egregious or flagrant shots." Also in this release Goodell states, "One of our highest priorities is player safety. We all know that football is a tough game that includes hard contact. But that carries with it an obligation to do all that we can to protect all players from unnecessary injury caused by dangerous techniques from those who play outside the rules" (Florio, ProFootball Talk). From both of these pieces of evidence the notion of player safety is continually reiterated in the sense that these particular helmet to helmet hits are putting the players

around the league in a very dangerous situation. Although both Goodell and Anderson acknowledge the fact that football is a dangerous sport and they are not changing the rules, they emphasize that it is in the player's best interest to abide by the regulations or else a significant fine will be issued.

When looking at the opposing group within the artifact, comprised of the National Football League players, feel the increased safety measures are unnecessary. The key elements presented by NFL players include tradition authenticity of the game, and acceptance of the risks involved in football. This can be seen throughout different player's reactions when asked by the media. Ray Lewis, a well respected linebacker for the Baltimore Ravens, claims, "The game will be diluted very quickly because you'll have people thinking about that. The bottom line is, those are hits that you go into your defensive room, you're getting praised for because that's the way the game of football is supposed to be played" (Battista, Ny Times). In another quote New York Giants wide receiver Mario Manningham claims, "It's part of the game" (Battista New York Times).

And, lastly Brent Celek of the Philadelphia Eagles said, "I've played this game since I was in the second grade, I knew what I was getting into" (Battista, New York Times).

Each one of these quotes by these respected players revolves directly around the issues of authenticity, tradition, and accepted risks of football. When looking at the three individuals quoted one player played defense, while the other two players played on the offensive side of the ball. This is an important issue because it is the defensive players who will be directly affected by the increase in regulations, and both sides of players are completely against the increase discipline. This is not a case of certain players depending

on their position having differing viewpoints. Every player, no matter what position they, play agrees that this is unnecessary. This is unique because the league is trying to protect players on the offensive side of the ball, but as one can see by the quote from Brent Celek, who is an offensive player, claiming, "He knew what he was getting himself into when he signed up." This particular quote by Celek exemplifies the notion that he knowingly inherited the risks, which could occur from the game of football. No one forced these NFL players to participate in the sport, it was their own personal decision. This proves to be a driving force behind the disapproval of the increase in safety regulations by NFL officials.

Now I will perform the second step of an ideological criticism and identify the suggested elements linked to the presented elements in the artifact. As one can see with the first group of people, the NFL officials, their main reason for this increase in discipline is safety. When looking into this issue of safety I have found enormous evidence supporting the notion that safety in the NFL must be increased. This can be seen in the amount of helmet-to-helmet injuries that occur. Head injuries are a major issue when dealing with the game of football, due to the severity of these types of injuries. It is the cases of John Mackey's dementia, Andre Waters committing suicide, Ted Johnson's concussions, the stories seem to multiply everyday according to Gary Myers, an NFL columnist. Each of those names listed above used to play in the NFL, but their careers were short lived due to head injuries. Take, for example, Steve Young, former quarterback for the San Francsico 49ers, who had to end his career early due to reoccurring concussions. The numbers do not lie; head injuries are a growing concern,

especially in regards to concussions. With the evidence presented, the NFL officials concerns for safety is a legitimate one, due to the severity of head injuries.

Now looking at suggested elements in regards to the NFL players whose major issue revolves around the authenticity of the game, one can see these players have a legitimate cause for uproar as well. One element that comes forth is an issue regarding masculinity. In the quote presented by Ray Lewis, he stated, "The bottom line is, those are hits that you go into your defensive room, you're getting praised for because that's the way the game of football is supposed to be played" (Battista, New York Times). Former NFL player and current talk show host Mark Schlereth claims, "You can't take the NFL and what we do and eliminate contact, the game of football is about going out there and separating the man from the ball. Going out there and playing hard. It's reaction" (Leahy, USA Today). These two quotes prove that this is much more of an issue than tradition and authenticity, but also an issue regarding the masculinity of the players. With the new regulations players will not be getting praise from their teammates for the huge helmet-to-helmet hits they place on other players. Both current and former players are fixed to the notion that football is meant to be a tough and physical sport. Although the rules are not changing the ability to perform these dangerous hits, will take away from the masculinity of the players. From this one can see that the element surrounding masculinity is a driving force behind the players.

In this third step I have associated an ideology from the evidence I have found for the two particular groups. The NFL officials use a safety ideology, which is the driving force behind their increase in discipline. When looking at this one can associate McGee's

term ideograph to the issue of <safety> in this artifact. This safety ideograph is diachronic due to the increased safety concerns, which have presented themselves over the past couple of years. Back when football first started safety wasn't a cause for concern, but as time goes on safety begins to take on a whole different meaning. The NFL officials use the ideology safety throughout their rhetoric in hopes to persuade the players to perform fewer dangerous hits.

When looking at the group, which includes the NFL players, an ideology revolving around tradition and authenticity evolves. Throughout the players rhetoric this particular issue has shaped their views and beliefs on the particular topic. Most NFL players forget to take into account their life after football, or the severity of injuries that they could encounter. This can be seen in the quotes listed above regarding masculinity. The players are surrounded by the masculinity views throughout the league regarding big hits, and top plays on sports center.

In the final step of ideological criticism I will identify the functions of the ideology. The safety ideology, which is present for NFL officials, functions in such a way around the players of the league. The NFL officials do not play the game, the players do, so this ideology dictates what players can and can not do. This ideology will decrease player's chances of receiving severe helmet-to-helmet injuries, and in exchange allow them to live longer and healthier lives after football. The ideology will accomplish this by the NFL officials issuing severe fines for players who do not obey the new rules, hoping that these fines will make the players play a safer game.

Now when looking at the functions served by the tradition and authenticity ideology surrounding the players views and beliefs one can see that this is the driving force as to why they play the game. This particular ideology serves as the reason in which they signed up to play this great game of football. As seen by the quotes of the players claiming, "They knew what they were singing up for," and "The game will become diluted." These quotes suggest the specific function of this ideology and that happens to be the reason for why they play the game. Every player in the league plays the game the right way, or else they would not have been able to make it into the NFL.

## Conclusion

This paper explored the controversy within the NFL involving the increase in disciplinary action by the NFL officials, in regards to helmet-to-helmet hits on defenseless players. Throughout the controversy two groups of people emerged, the first group being the NFL officials who imposed the regulations, while the second group being the NFL players who opposed the increased regulations. I used an ideological criticism in order to unpack and discover the values and beliefs, which drive both these competing ideologies. At the beginning of the paper I listed a research question, which asked: How do competing ideologies use rhetoric to influence their position on this particular conflict of violence? From this paper I have found that rhetoric was an essential tool used by both sides in order to influence each position. The NFL officials focused their rhetoric on the safety and disciplinary actions, while the NFL players focused their rhetoric on tradition, authenticity, and the accepted risks which come with the game. Both sides had very strong opinions on the issue and used rhetoric in order to express these issues. The NFL

officials used safety concerns in hopes that it would encourage players to play a safer form of football. This caused uproar from players. The NFL players responded with rhetoric revolving around the tradition and authenticity of the game, stating they have been playing the game this way their whole life, why change now?

Although NFL players are disappointed with the decision by NFL officials to impose these new safety regulations on the game, they must abide by these new playing standards if they want to continue to play the sport they love. From this controversy the NFL officials and the NFL players have two completely different views on the topic, and both sides will continue to be in a dispute until both sides compromise with one another. As NFL officials acknowledge they are not changing the rules of the game, they must also understand that the players have been playing the game the same way their whole life. On the other hand the NFL players must understand that although football is a relatively violent sport, increasing safety measures is not going to change the game of football dramatically.

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