

NEWS RELEASE

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713-654-1122

For more information contact

Richard Mithoff

Football Helmet Manufacturer Sued for Teen's Traumatic Brain Injury

Houston -- The parents of a 16-year-old Houston high school football player has sued Riddell Sports Group for negligence for failing to design a football helmet that would protect the teen in a game.

Susanne and Terry Reid, parents of Cooper, said their son was severely harmed in September 2022 at the homecoming game for Troup High School in the city of Troup in northeast Texas. Cooper was a linebacker for the Troup Tigers and suffered a traumatic brain injury during the game. His parents claim the injury occurred because of defects in the design of the helmet, the Riddell SpeedFlex helmet.

Cooper was hit during the game, suffered an impact and sustained a right front subdural hematoma which resulted in a severe traumatic brain injury. Following the impact, he was helped up, took a few steps and collapsed on the field.

Cooper was rushed to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with a severe traumatic brain injury and underwent two craniotomies as well as surgery for placement of a shunt. He has suffered permanent life-altering injuries because of the defects in the helmet. He has undergone and continues to undergo extensive medical and neurorehabilitative treatment to address his injuries.

According to Houston attorneys Richard Mithoff and Janie Jordan, Cooper has sustained permanent, life-altering injuries because of the defects in the sports equipment.

“He cannot hear, speak or walk. He is wheelchair bound and requires around the clock care,” said Mithoff. “Riddell was aware of the defect in the design of the helmet and this equipment did not protect Cooper.”

The helmet was not designed to deflect, distribute and absorb impact to a player’s head, according to the lawsuit filed in federal court. The helmet was marketed as having state-of-the-art protection from head and brain injuries for the wearer and Riddell touted that the SpeedFlex helmet was backed by extensive research from its millions of on-field impacts. However, according to the lawsuit, both the helmet’s design and the materials the helmet was constructed with were defective and did not protect Cooper from a devastating traumatic brain injury. As designed, manufactured, marketed, sold and distributed, the helmet was unreasonably dangerous and defective because it failed to have a structure and design that would effectively deflect and deform to distribute, diminish and absorb the foreseeable forces of impact and reduce the peak accelerations of impact energy to a player’s head. The features of the helmet which were defective as designed, include but are not limited to, the quick release fastener between the helmet shell and face mask, the dual lines or ridges designed and molded into the helmet shell and the liner or energy absorption system inside the helmet.

The lawsuit is asking for a jury trial.