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The Cover

Since 1860, football has spread across the continent by leaps and mounds of spread-eagled bodies. Each autumn sure as falling leaves the solid thump of physical contact can be felt and seen on sports fields and in hospital emergency rooms.

Football started when young William Webb Ellis lifted the soccer ball at Rugby School, England, in 1823. Little did he know what he was creating. As he galloped around the soccer field, startling players and spectators, his opponents reached out at attempting to knock him to the ground for his impertinence. If he had been upended, perhaps stretching or tearing a ligament or two, that might have been the end of carrying the ball. But he wasn't! Successfully eluding his irate pursuers, he scored the world's first touchdown, and the game of rugby was born.

Rugby was exported to the United States and introduced into Ivy League schools 40 years later. For a decade Harvard and Yale banned it as too rough. Later modifications were introduced, and rugby became the great American pastime of football.

Since then what red-blooded American has not dreamed of donning cleats like Namath or Simpson? But such ambitions can be shattered in busted plays or broken limbs.

During an average four-year high school football career, at least 50% of players can expect an injury sufficiently severe to miss a game. However, less than 1% of injuries are serious enough to prevent further participation in the sport. Paradox-

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