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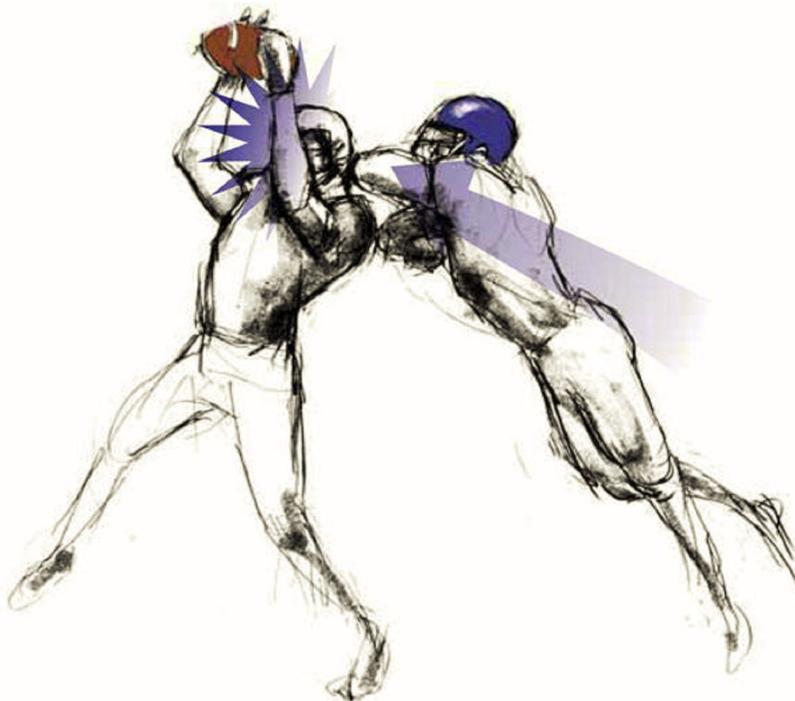
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FOOTBALL

NCAA cracks down on dangerous hits

New rules could see suspensions for players who lead with their helmet.



PUBLISHED: 09/09/2009
BY MIKE MULLEN

The video has been watched more than seven and a half million times: Heavy metal drums pound in the background as Georgia wide receiver Reggie Brown receives a pass, and turns up field. Waiting for him is Auburn's Junior Rosegreen, who propels himself violently into Brown, who fumbled the ball. Moments after, the camera shows Brown lying on the field, motionless, an announcer is heard saying "This was a great hit."

Not anymore.

The 2004 hit, which is now a popular Youtube video, was later cited as an example when the NCAA began to look closer at helmet to helmet hits. Indeed, Ron Courson, the Georgia trainer who attended to Brown, headed a task force which helped to strengthen the existing rule on head down hits. Now, the rule is even stronger.

In the last five years, the NCAA has enacted a series of regulations in an attempt to cut down on illegal helmet to helmet hits, referred to as "spearing." These hits, where a player lowers his head and propels himself into another player, are often dangerous and sometimes fatal, both to the player receiving and the one delivering the hit.

In February, the NCAA supplemented the existing rules which govern illegal hits. The NCAA

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