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Pac-12 trialing new concussion protocol involving virtual reality goggles

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The Pac-12 has been an early adopter of virtual reality to help improve the football product on the field the last several years so it makes plenty of sense that the conference is also going to use the technology to help keep players safer when they're unable to go back between the lines due to concussions.

Schools like Stanford have had players virtually run through plays and get reps without actually getting physical reps for several seasons now and many more programs across the country and across the sport have followed suit. Earlier this summer at Pac-12 Media Day for example, both Cardinal head coach **David Shaw** and tailback **Bryce Love** noted the Heisman front-runner was able to still stay mentally engaged with spring practice even as he sat out the entire session to return to 100% health. Now the hope is that same technology can also help players who suffer concussions can more accurately be diagnosed and treated.

[*The San Jose Mercury News'* Jon Wilner has a terrific writeup](#) on the whole project the Pac-12 is undertaking, which has support from the NCAA and even the Department of Defense. The piece has a ton of details on everything from funding to what the project is eventually going to turn into but the short of it is that players will don VR goggles and will eventually go through a series of tests to establish a baseline. That baseline, which will be put into a database, can then be used to determine quickly whether a player has a concussion during a game and can help guide the treatment process.

“Research shows that proper recovery limits the chances of a secondary concussion, and that the sooner a player is removed from play, the faster the recovery,” said **Matthew McQueen**, an associate professor at Colorado and the director of the Pac-12’s Concussion Coordinating Unit. “We’ve found that concussion recovery has a signature eye movement.”

The data collected in the project will not only help the players themselves as they deal with a very serious issue affecting the sport right now, but also should help further even more research into concussions and their treatment. Eventually the VR goggles treatment will be done with every player in the conference but for now it will just be Colorado, Washington, Oregon State, USC and Utah who will be submitting data into the database. Other schools and sports will eventually be phased in.

It goes without saying that this is one of the biggest issues in the game right now and it certainly seems as though the Pac-12 doesn’t mind being out on the leading edge when it comes to dealing with it either.