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Riddell Acquires New Impact Monitoring Technology

by SportsNewsSource 9/10/2004

Riddell Sports Group has acquired a new impact monitoring system called the Head Impact Telemetry System, or HIT System(TM), from Lebanon, NH, based Simbex LLC. The acquisition will enable Riddell to continue to be the technology leader in protective equipment and offer the best standard of care for athletes.

The HIT System monitors and records the severity and incidence of impacts taken by a player via small sensors in the helmet, similar to those that trigger air bag deployments in cars. The sensors forward vital, real-time, hit-by-hit data to a computer on the sideline through a state-of-the-art telemetry system, allowing team trainers and physicians to monitor and assess on-the-field impacts and potential concussions immediately.

"This acquisition allows us to continue to push the envelope on research-based protection products," said Bill Sherman, president and CEO of Riddell Sports Group, Inc. "We started with the Revolution(R) helmet, and then we continued with our proactive endorsement of "ImPACT(TM)" neuropsychological evaluation software. Now we can package these products along with this innovative technology to develop a more complete protection system."

Riddell will also have the ability to utilize the field data collected by the HIT System to gain a greater understanding of the biomechanics of head impacts and concussions, which could help the company design better protective equipment in

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the future.

Simbex LLC developed the HIT System over a period of four years through funding from the National Institutes of Health. The development followed more than six years of research by Simbex founder and president, Rick Greenwald, Ph.D. and Brown Medical School researcher, J.J. Trey Crisco, Ph.D., director of the bioengineering laboratory, Department of Orthopedics.

"This agreement marks a significant milestone for Simbex," said Simbex president and founder Rick Greenwald. "The overall goal of our organization is to create marketable products and solutions for active life improvement, and we are confident that our new partnership with Riddell will help us meet our objectives."

The system was used extensively during the 2003 football season by the Virginia Tech University NCAA Division I football team. Virginia Tech is continuing to use the HIT System in 2004, along with the football teams at the University of Oklahoma and the University of North Carolina.

The overall system goes beyond just transferring data from helmets on the field to a computer on the sideline. Additional software provides alerts to the sideline staff, using a pager, if any player on the field received an impact or series of impacts that may be suspect. Case history software also enables medical and bio-mechanical research from the field data.

"One of the most exciting aspects of this acquisition is the ability to leverage the insight and biomechanical data we will collect concerning head impacts as a regular part of football," added Sherman. "From this data, we can continually refine our products to provide the best possible standard of care for athletes."

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