

Gear, Impact May Be Cause of Height Loss

A HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL player can lose more than a game on the gridiron.

He can temporarily lose a centimeter – almost half an inch – of his height, according to Dr. Brian J. Campbell, an assistant professor of biomechanics at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

“The decrease is likely due to the intermittent high-impact compressive loading of the spinal column during a football game, as well as the low-impact continuous compressive forces from equipment weight,” Campbell said.

Researchers had already shown that gravity compresses the spine. This phenomenon, called “creep,” can reduce a person’s height by about 1 percent in a day. The loss is restored during sleep.

Campbell said fluid loss in vertebrae may contribute to the height loss, but more research is needed to show the mechanisms that affect players’ height.

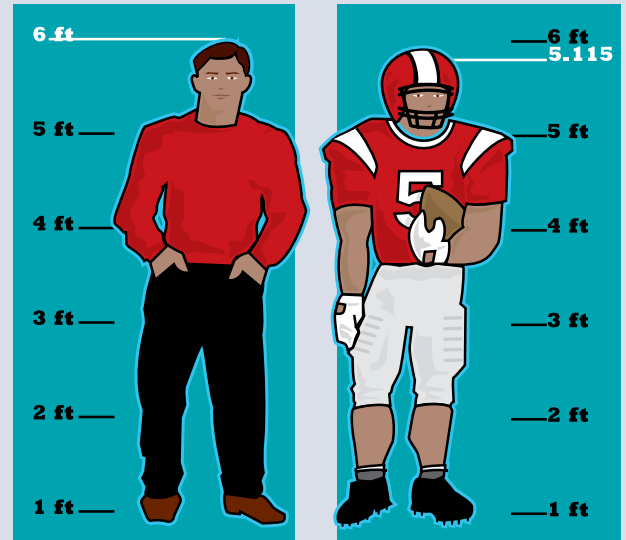
In his study, a certified athletic trainer measured 10 high school football players’ heights before and after

a game. They played positions on the field that involve repetitive blocking and tackling, such as lineman and defensive tackle. The players’ average pre-game height was 176.56 centimeters, while their post-game height was 175.81 centimeters.

“In a game such as football, one centimeter could mean the difference between a game-winning catch or a blocked field goal,” Campbell said.

Studying height change in football players could be beneficial for understanding lower back injuries commonly suffered during play, he added.

He presented his findings at the annual meeting of the American Col-



lege of Sports Medicine in May. The UL Lafayette faculty member’s research drew the attention of major television networks, such as CBS, NBC and ABC, and national publications, such as *U.S. News and World Report*.

RESEARCH FINDINGS REVEAL HOW TEACHERS’ VALUES COMPARE

Do K-12 teachers share the values of most Americans?

Dr. Robert Slater, a UL Lafayette professor of education, analyzed public opinion survey results from 1972 to 2006 to answer that question. He wrote about his findings in an article included in the Winter 2008 issue of *Education Next*, a journal published by the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

Slater’s research is based on the premise that teachers impart more than facts and figures to their classes.

“Teaching is as much a moral effort as it is an intellectual enterprise; teachers not only educate our children

how to think and solve problems, they also inform children’s beliefs about what is right, good and important in life, shaping their values in the

process,” Slater observed in the article.

Most teachers convey the value of hard work, perseverance and meeting deadlines, for example.

Slater noted that there are roughly 3.5 million public and private school teachers in the

United States. During the 2005-06 school year, they taught about 54 million elementary and secondary school students.

To compare teachers’ and other Americans’ values, he studied results

of the National Opinion Research Center’s General Social Survey. That questionnaire produces “one of the largest, most reliable, and frequently used data sets in the social sciences,” he wrote.

Here are some of his conclusions:

- Teachers tend to be less supportive of free speech rights than Americans with similar levels of education. But they are more supportive of free speech rights than other less-educated Americans.
- Teachers expressed more conservative views on homosexuality than other Americans with similar levels of education.
- Thirty-seven percent of teachers reported attending church at least once a week, compared to 26 percent of Americans who say they attend one or more times per week.
- Teachers are 9 to 11 percent more likely to pray one or more times per day than other Americans.

