

## **Paul Hornung Sues the Helmet Maker Riddell Over Concussions**

By Ken Belson from NYTimes.com

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Paul Hornung, the Hall of Fame running back with the Green Bay Packers, has sued Riddell, asserting that the company knew of the dangers of brain trauma more than 50 years ago but failed to warn him and other players that their helmets would do nothing to prevent concussions.

The lawsuit, which seeks damages of at least \$50,000, is the latest legal challenge against Riddell, the biggest sports helmet manufacturer in the country. Riddell is a co-defendant with the N.F.L. in a class-action lawsuit filed by thousands of former football players who accused the company and the league of hiding the dangers of concussions from them.

In that case, Riddell was able to separate its claims from the N.F.L., which has agreed to a settlement that could pay hundreds of millions of dollars to players with severe neurological disorders. Once that case is fully resolved — it still may be appealed — the federal judge overseeing it, Anita B. Brody, will return to the question of whether the players have a legitimate claim against Riddell.

Hornung, though, sued only Riddell, so that his case would not be lumped together with the class-action suit, which is being heard in Philadelphia.

In his complaint, filed in state court in Illinois, Hornung claims that Riddell should have warned players that its plastic helmets, while helping to prevent skull fractures, “provided no protection” against brain trauma, including concussions.

“Prior to, during and after Paul Hornung’s N.F.L. football career, Riddell knew of the harmful long-term effects of brain traumas sustained by football players while wearing Riddell’s supposed protective equipment; however, it misrepresented and concealed these facts from Paul Hornung,” the complaint said.

Erin Griffin, a spokeswoman for the company, said that Riddell was not aware of Hornung’s lawsuit and that it did not comment on continuing litigation.

Hornung, 80, sustained concussions and sub-concussive hits during his career, which lasted from 1957 to 1966. In college, at Notre Dame, he wore a leather helmet without a face mask. It was only when he made it to the N.F. L. that he wore a plastic helmet with a face mask.

Hornung’s lawyers said that players were led to believe the plastic helmet would offer more protection, which emboldened them to take risks they never would have taken with leather helmets.

“Riddell made promises to everyone that wore that helmet, and the evidence will show that they built an industry based on the safety of the device, analogous to filters on cigarettes,” said Brad Sohn, one of the lawyers representing Hornung. “People relied on them to make the game safer, when in fact it made it more dangerous.”