



## The Evolution of the Football Helmet

The first football helmet was made in the 1920s, and consisted of soft leather with metal earpieces. It didn't offer much protection from head-on collisions. However, it did prevent competitors from playing too rough (both the offensive and defensive player knew they had a high risk of injury).

In the 1930s, the hard leather style featured a hard case under the leather that is virtually indestructible. The added protection of the helmet introduced a more aggressive style of play, and chinstraps soon became necessary to keep the helmets from flying.

In the 1940s and 1950s, helmets started to feature air bubbles to soften the hits. Facemasks with one bar were also introduced at this time. There's no doubt that these helmets were safer, but players were also becoming stronger and faster, thus increasing the potential for injuries.

Full face masks appeared in the 1970s, and visors followed in the '80s. Also, polycarbonate and other sophisticated materials replaced hard plastics and helped absorb combat.

By the 1990s, the dangers of concussions had come to light, so a heavy focus was placed on making helmets safer. Studies were conducted to figure out how helmets could absorb the blow, which led to improvements in shape, padding, and outside material. The single-bar facemask was also banned and replaced by full face protection.

But there's still room for improvement. Helmets are being designed now that can provide immediate information about collisions and detect head injuries in real-time. As the players continue to gain strength and speed, it is important to provide them with protection so that they can play the game of football at a high level without the high risk.



▲ The Evolution of the Helmet