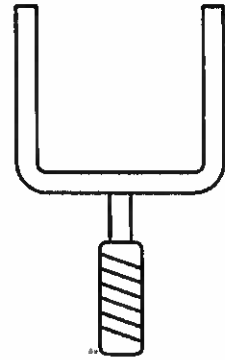
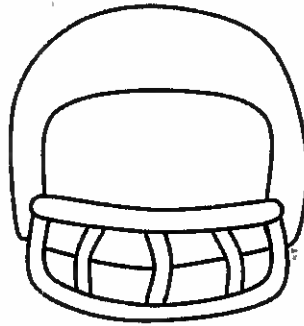
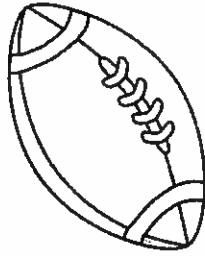


Write a short paragraph that explains the central idea of the article. Use at least two details from the article to support your response.



SAN FRANCISCO — © NewsELA 2015

Worried about head injuries, San Francisco 49ers linebacker Chris Borland is leaving football. Not even the promise of stardom and piles of money could change his mind. After one outstanding rookie season, Borland is retiring at age 24. The 49ers announced his decision Monday night, without offering an explanation. Earlier in the day, however, Borland told the ESPN television program "Outside the Lines" that he wants to do "what's best for my health."

There is increasing evidence that the repeated blows to the head football players sustain can lead to memory loss, headaches, confusion, moodiness and other serious symptoms. Damaging blows to the head, or concussions, are common in football and several other contact sports. Players often recover fully from a single concussion, yet multiple concussions can sometimes lead to permanent brain damage, behavioral problems and depression.

A Punishing Player

Borland had a team-leading 108 tackles as a rookie, emerging as a punishing defender. He also had a sack and two interceptions.

"From what I've researched and what I've experienced, I don't think it's worth the risk," Borland said during Monday's interview. "I feel largely the same, as sharp as I've ever been," he said. However, he added, "I'm concerned that if you wait till you have symptoms, it's too late."

49ers general manager Trent Baalke said the team was surprised by his move, but added that it respected Borland's decision.

Borland's big announcement comes less than a week after five-time All Pro linebacker Patrick Willis walked away from football. Borland replaced Willis in the starting lineup after Willis suffered a toe injury in October that required surgery.

The National Football League (NFL), like the 49ers, said it respects Borland's decision, adding that "playing any sport is a personal decision." The league stressed that "football has never been safer." It noted that rule changes, better equipment and improved medical care have all led to progress.

"A Consummate Professional"

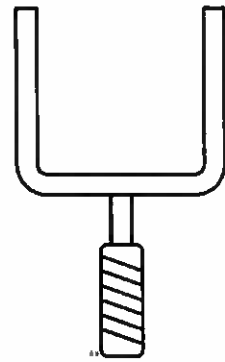
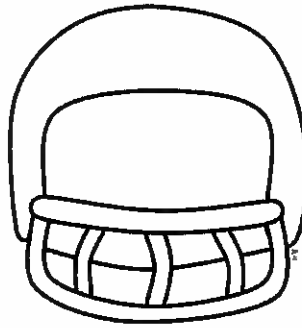
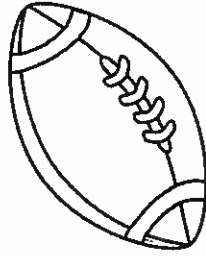
Jeff Miller, NFL senior vice president of health and safety, said the changes have led to real improvements throughout the NFL. Concussions "were down 25 percent last year, continuing a three-year downward trend," he said.

"We continue to make significant investments in independent research to advance the science and understanding of these issues. We are seeing a growing culture of safety. Everyone involved in the game knows that there is more work to do and player safety will continue to be our top priority," Miller said. The retirements of Willis and Borland are big blows to the 49ers, who have suffered a series of other recent losses. The team lost coach Jim Harbaugh and defensive coordinator Vic Fangio after the season ended. It then watched Frank Gore, Mike Lupati, Chris Culliver and Perrish Cox leave for other teams this past week. Defensive line coach Jim Tomsula was promoted to head coach following an 8-8 season, the team's first time out of the playoffs in four years.

"While unexpected, we certainly respect Chris' decision," Baalke said. "From speaking with Chris, it was evident that he had put a great deal of thought into this decision. He was a consummate professional from Day One and a very well-respected member of our team and community."

He added, "Chris is a determined young man that overcame long odds in his journey to the NFL and we are confident he will use the same approach to become very successful in his future endeavors. We will always consider him a 49er and wish him all the best."

Write a short paragraph that explains the central idea of the article. Use at least two details from the article to support your response.



SAN FRANCISCO – © NewsEla 2015

San Francisco 49ers linebacker Chris Borland is leaving football to avoid the long-term damage that head injuries can cause. Not even the promise of stardom and piles of money can change his mind.

After one outstanding rookie season, Borland is retiring at age 24. The 49ers announced his decision Monday night, without offering an explanation. Earlier in the day, however, Borland told the ESPN television program "Outside the Lines" that he wants to do "what's best for my health." **Before "It's Too Late"**

The repeated blows to the head that football players experience can cause permanent damage to their brains. Damaging blows to the brain are known as concussions. Following concussions, players can suffer memory loss, confusion and moodiness, among other symptoms. Many of these go away with time, but multiple concussions can lead to long-term problems.

Borland led the 49ers in tackles during his one season, so he certainly had plenty of opportunities to injure himself.

"From what I've researched and what I've experienced, I don't think it's worth the risk," Borland said during Monday's interview. "I feel largely the same, as sharp as I've ever been," he said. However, he added, "I'm concerned that if you wait till you have symptoms, it's too late."

San Francisco 49ers general manager Trent Baalke said the team was surprised by his move, but he added that the team respects Borland's decision.

Borland's big announcement comes less than a week after linebacker Patrick Willis left the team. Willis suffered a severe toe injury in October that ended his season.

The National Football League (NFL) said it respects Borland's decision, adding that "playing any sport is a personal decision." The league stressed that "football has never been safer." It noted that rule changes, better equipment and improved medical care have all led to progress.

Big Blows To 49ers

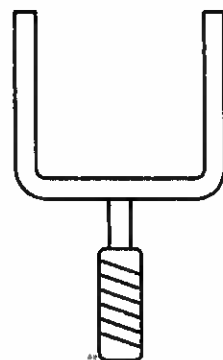
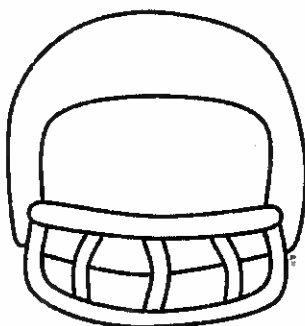
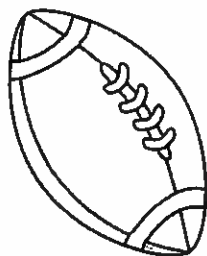
NFL vice president Jeff Miller said the changes have led to real improvements throughout the NFL. Concussions were down 25 percent last year, he said.

"We are seeing a growing culture of safety," Miller said. While "there is more work to do," player safety will continue to be the league's major focus, he added.

The retirements of Willis and Borland are big blows to the 49ers, who have suffered a series of other recent losses. The team lost coach Jim Harbaugh and defensive coordinator Vic Fangio after the season ended. It then watched Frank Gore, Mike Lupati, Chris Culliver and Perrish Cox leave for other teams this past week.

"While unexpected, we certainly respect Chris' decision," Baalke said. "From speaking with Chris, it was evident that he had put a great deal of thought into this." Borland, he said, was a complete "professional from Day One and a very well-respected member of our team and community." He added, "Chris is a determined young man that overcame long odds in his journey to the NFL. We are confident he will use the same approach to become very successful in his future endeavors. We will always consider him a 49er and wish him all the best."

Write a short paragraph that explains the central idea of the article. Use at least two details from the article to support your response.



SAN FRANCISCO — © NewsEla 2015

San Francisco 49ers linebacker Chris Borland is leaving football. He said he wants to avoid the damage that blows to the head can cause. Not even the chance to be a star player and to earn piles of money can change his mind. Borland is retiring at the young age of 24. The 49ers announced his decision Monday night. Borland said he wants to do "what's best for my health."

Not "Worth The Risk"

Football players are often hit on the head during games. Bad blows to the head are known as concussions. Over time, all of those hits can cause damage to their brains. Players can suffer memory loss and their thinking can become confused. "From what I've researched and what I've experienced, I don't think it's worth the risk," Borland said. He said that right now his memory and thinking seem pretty much the same as always. However, he does not want to wait until it is "too late." San Francisco 49ers general manager Trent Baalke said the team was surprised that Borland wanted to leave football. Still, it supports Borland's decision, he said.

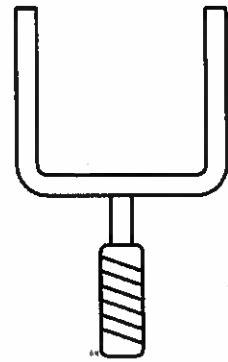
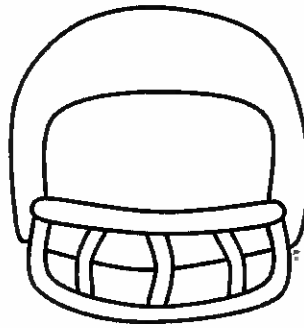
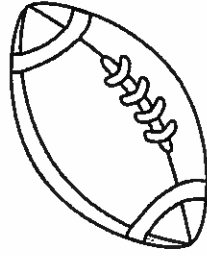
The National Football League (NFL) said that it also supports Borland's decision. However, it added that "football has never been safer." New rules and better equipment are making things much safer for players, the league said.

"Wish Him All The Best"

NFL vice president Jeff Miller said things have gotten much better for players. He said that there were fewer concussions last year than in earlier years. "There is more work to do," Miller admitted. However, the league will keep on trying its best to make the sport safe to play, he said.

Baalke said he had talked to Borland about his decision to leave football. He could tell that Borland "put a great deal of thought into this," he said. Borland was "a very well-respected member of our team," Baalke said. "We will always consider him a 49er and wish him all the best," Baalke added.

Write a short paragraph that explains the central idea of the article. Use at least two details from the article to support your response.



SAN FRANCISCO – © NewsELA 2015

Chris Borland is a star player for the San Francisco 49ers football team. On Monday night, his team made a surprise announcement: Borland will be quitting football for good. Borland is worried about his health. He fears that blows to his head may damage his brain. The chance to be a star was not enough to change Borland's mind. The chance to earn piles of money didn't either. Borland is retiring at the young age of 24.

Not Taking Any Chances

Borland said he wants to do "what's best for my health." Football players are often hit on the head during games. Bad hits to the head are called concussions. Over time, all of those hits can cause damage to their brains. Players can start to forget things. Their thinking can become confused.

Borland said he did not want to take any chances. Right now, his thinking seems pretty much the same as always, he said. However, he does not want to wait until it is "too late." Trent Baalke manages the 49ers. He said the team was surprised that Borland wants to leave football. Still, the team supports him if that is what he wants to do, Baalke said.

"More Work To Do"

The National Football League (NFL) also said that it supports Borland. However, it added that "football has never been safer." New rules and new helmets have made things much safer for players, the league said.

Jeff Miller is an NFL vice president. Things have gotten much better for players, he said. There were fewer concussions last year than usual, he added.

"There is more work to do," Miller admitted. The league will keep on trying to make football a safer sport, he said. Baalke said Borland had talked to him about leaving football. He could tell that Borland "put a great deal of thought into this," he said. Borland was "a very well-respected member of our team," Baalke said. "We will always consider him a 49er and wish him all the best," he added.