



## **Riddell Kicks Off Its 2016 Smarter Football Program**

*Football Equipment Innovator Pledges \$100,000 in Product Donations to Programs that Demonstrate Safer, Smarter Tactics on and off the Playing Field*

**Rosemont, Ill. – June 16, 2016** – Today Riddell launched the second season of its Smarter Football program, a grassroots campaign that recognizes and rewards those who advance the sport through more progressive playing habits and approaches to the game. As part of the program, Riddell is pledging a total of \$100,000 of product to the teams that best articulate how an equipment grant strengthens their ability to implement a safer, smarter game on and off the field.

“Smarter Football is back for 2016 and we couldn’t be more excited,” said Dan Arment, president of Riddell. “We created this initiative to reward those who advance the game, and to provide a platform for the broader football community to discuss ways we can all make the game safer and more intelligent. These themes are essential in preserving the future of a sport we so passionately believe in, and it’s important that we keep the dialogue going. We’re pleased that Smarter Football has become a platform to advance this conversation.”

Football players, parents, coaches, and fans at all levels of play can now apply for a chance to win a grant by entering a submission at [Riddell.com/SmarterFootball](http://Riddell.com/SmarterFootball). The deadline for entries is July 31, 2016, and recipients will be announced shortly after the submission period closes. Riddell also encourages the larger football community to use #SmarterFootball to join the conversation via social media and share examples of smarter football in action.

“The game of football is constantly evolving, and as a player you have to continually find new, more intelligent ways to get an edge,” said All-Pro wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald. “It’s also important that the broader football community does its part in progressing the sport so that it’s smarter and safer for everyone involved. That’s why I’m excited to join Riddell in recognizing and rewarding programs that bring their own unique approach to player safety and performance.”

For Riddell, smarter football means leading innovation in product design to create more advanced protective technologies. It means developing breakthrough wearable systems to help team staff more closely monitor players’ behavior when they step onto the field. And it means leveraging advancements in research to better understand the forces behind head impacts and using them to inform the next generation of protective equipment and player monitoring tools.

During last year’s Smarter Football program, Riddell received close to 700 grant submissions and awarded seven programs, spanning multiple markets across the country, significant equipment donations at the conclusion of the inaugural initiative. One recipient, the Juniata Thundercats

(Philadelphia, PA), articulated in their winning submission the importance of being proactive regarding player safety and how an equipment grant would help the program better serve their community.

“We’ve seen firsthand how the sport of football unites communities, teaches important values, and motivates young people to dream big,” said Bryant Paden, Thundercats president and co-founder. “Given the importance of football to our neighborhood kids, we have a responsibility to them and their families to ensure we’re doing our part to protect these athletes using the latest techniques and tools. And we don’t stop when the players step off the field, we also participate in a number of service initiatives in the community to bring the lessons of football full circle.”

Today’s game is changing and so is the approach to athlete safety. The Smarter Football program encourages the entire football community to push together towards advancing the sport we believe in and protect its players for generations to come. To take part in the second season of Smarter Football follow [@RiddellSports](#) using #SmarterFootball and visit [Riddell.com/SmarterFootball](http://Riddell.com/SmarterFootball) to apply for a grant.

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#### **About Riddell**

Riddell is a premier designer and developer of football helmets, protective sports equipment, head impact monitoring technologies, apparel and related accessories. A recognized leader in helmet technology and innovation, Riddell is the leading manufacturer of football helmets and shoulder pads, and a top provider of reconditioning services (cleaning, repairing, repainting and recertifying existing equipment). For more information, visit our website at <http://www.riddell.com>, like the Riddell Facebook page, or follow Riddell on Instagram and Twitter [@RiddellSports](#).

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