

New Protective Helmets to be Mandatory for Arizona Fall League

Written by Devon Teeple

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The new Rawlings s100 batting helmet, being worn here by the Mets' David Wright, will become mandatory head gear for the Arizona Fall League this October.

The [Arizona Fall League](#) players are literally getting a “head start” on the competition [according to MLB correspondent Benjamin Hill](#).

Starting in 2010, that the Rawlings S100 helmet is going to be required throughout all of Minor League Baseball. The Arizona Fall League is going to be the first test project. Beginning on October 13, 2009, the AFL, which is a showcase league featuring prospects from all 30 MLB clubs, will wear the new mandated helmets.

"The thought is that once you institute something in the Minor Leagues, those habits will carry over [to the Majors]," said MLB vice president of public relations, Pat Courtney.

The reason for the new helmets is the added protection of all players throughout professional baseball. This year has seen a rash of concussions and head injuries, most recently affecting players such as Edgar Gonzalez, Scott Rolen and David Wright. Security is the main reason for the new changes but the current look of the helmet is what concerning some players. "If it's about the safety of the players, then I'm all for it," said Reds prospect Yonder Alonso, who will suit up in the AFL as a member of the Peoria Saguaros. "Something like this could make us all a little bit better, because we're not going to be up there thinking about the dangers of getting hit by a pitch."

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Pittsburgh Pirates prospect Brian Friday has been subject to two head injuries this year and is looking forward to the extra precaution that is being instituted. "I have heard that the current helmets can only really withstand a 70-mph pitch, so in that regard I was really glad to hear about this," he said. "I just hope they're not too enormous."

Image is not everything in a case like this, but sooner or later a comfort level will be reached at all levels and Angels prospect Peter Bourjos has the same attitude as Friday, "As long as it's not too big, I'm all for it," he said. "There have been times I've been at-bat wishing I had something extra, because you can end up feeling pretty defenseless up there."

"A helmet is a helmet," said Alonso. "Eventually we'll all get used to it."

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Devon Teeple is a staff member of the Business of Sports Network, which includes The Biz of Baseball, The Biz of Football, The Biz of Basketball and The Biz of Hockey. He is a former professional baseball player with the River City Rascals & Gateway Grizzlies. Devon is a former student within Sports Management Worldwide's Baseball General Manager Class.

He is the founder of The GM's Perspective, is a intern with *The Football Outsiders* and contributor with the Plymouth River Eels. Currently, Devon is a Branch Manager at a financial institution in Southern Ontario Canada. He can be [contacted through the Business of Sports Network](#)
