

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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COMMUNICATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NFL Announces Winners of HeadHealthTECH Challenge IV

FieldTurf Inc., Corsair Innovations, Inc., and Yobel Technologies, LLC awarded funding to help bring innovative protective equipment technologies to market

TECH Challenge VI now open for submissions through September 13th

New York, NY – July 12, 2018 – The National Football League (NFL) and Football Research, Inc. (FRI) today announced the winners of the HeadHealthTECH Challenge IV, the latest in the [TECH Challenge series](#), which is operated on behalf of FRI by Duke University’s Clinical and Translational Science Institute (Duke CTSI). The TECH Challenge series is designed to stimulate research and innovation in protective equipment including helmets and related technologies, turf systems, shoulder and other pads, and additional innovative concepts.

TECH Challenge IV Winners:

- [FieldTurf Inc.](#) – **Montreal, Canada** – received a grant of \$195,000 to develop technology for an all-new sports surface designed to reduce impact, while providing optimal playability when exposed to standard play.
- [Corsair Innovations, Inc.](#) – **Plymouth, Massachusetts** – received a grant of \$168,504 to continue to test its FEAM material, an impact attenuation system for helmets. Corsair will work with one or more helmet manufacturers to guide development and testing of an improved helmet system. Corsair Innovations was awarded \$250,000 as part of the NFL-GE Head Health Challenge in 2015 to support the initial development of its FEAM material.
- [Yobel Technologies, LLC](#) – **Starkville, Mississippi** – a Mississippi State University start-up company, received a grant of \$20,000 to support testing of their optimized, lightweight, energy-absorbent prototyped faceguard that is designed to fit onto existing commercial helmets.

“TECH Challenge winners continue to demonstrate promising new technologies that are disrupting the marketplace,” said **JEFF MILLER**, NFL Executive Vice President of Health and Safety Initiatives. “We are excited to support these entrepreneurs as they continue to develop their novel designs, and we encourage all innovators to enter the next TECH Challenge.”

The NFL and FRI also announced the opening of the submission window for [TECH Challenge VI](#) through September 13, 2018.

“Our team at Duke CTSI appreciates the opportunity to work closely with the talented award winners,” said **BARRY MYERS**, MD, PhD, MBA, Director of Innovation at Duke CTSI, Coulter Program Director and Professor of Biomedical Engineering at Duke University and a consultant to the NFL Players Association (NFLPA). “We

continue to receive exciting, innovative, and pioneering proposals, and we look forward to seeing the next wave of new designs.”

About the Engineering Roadmap and HeadHealthTECH Challenges

The HeadHealthTECH Challenge series is one component of the *Play Smart. Play Safe. [Engineering Roadmap](#)*, a \$60-million comprehensive effort – funded by the NFL and managed by FRI – to improve the understanding of the biomechanics of head injuries in professional football and to create incentives for helmet manufacturers, small businesses, entrepreneurs, universities and others to develop and commercialize new and improved protective equipment, including helmets.

As part of the Engineering Roadmap, FRI continues to share research, data, tools, and information to crowdsource and stimulate innovation in protective equipment. In May, FRI [released a toolkit](#) including finite element models of modern football helmets, impact test dummy components, and test conditions simulating on-field impacts. Leading biomechanical engineers have also completed a [comprehensive video review](#) of player impacts to better understand concussion-causing events. The toolkit and the video review data are available for engineers and entrepreneurs – including those submitting proposals through the TECH Challenge series – to help improve their equipment designs.

FRI awards the most promising TECH Challenge proposals with a cumulative value of up to \$1 million a year, including in-kind support. A panel of expert judges selected by Duke CTSI, in collaboration with FRI, reviews and provides feedback to all proposals. Every TECH Challenge applicant is invited to reapply and receives constructive feedback from Duke CTSI biomechanical experts to help refine innovations and increase chances for success on future submissions.

To date, the TECH Challenges have awarded more than \$1,340,000 in grants to help advance the development of 11 new technologies. [Winners of TECH Challenge I](#), announced in April 2017, include [VyaTek Sports](#) for its highly efficient energy-absorbing Zorbz technology and [Guardian Innovations](#) for its Guardian Cap technology – a soft helmet cover designed to reduce the severity of impacts. [TECH Challenge II winners](#) included [2ND Skull](#), to research the effectiveness of its 2nd Skull® skull cap in reducing impact forces and developing a second-generation version; [Baytech Products](#), for its prototype HitGard® multi-component helmet system concept; and [Windpact](#), for its Crash Cloud™, an impact liner system using restricted air flow and foam in helmets and protective gear. [Winners of TECH Challenge III](#), announced in May of 2018, included [Impressio, Inc.](#) for its ultra-dissipative padding made from liquid-crystal elastomers (LCEs), [HRL Laboratories, LLC](#), to support the development and testing of its novel impact-attenuating pads for football helmets, and [AES Research & Design](#) for the testing of its anti-rotational kinematic (ARK) helmet prototype. Information about TECH Challenges and the process for making a submission can be found at: www.PlaySmartPlaySafe.com/HeadHealthTECH.

About the NFL’s Health and Safety Initiatives

The NFL is committed to advancing progress in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of sports-related injuries. As part of the NFL’s ongoing health and safety efforts, in September 2016, Commissioner Goodell launched *Play Smart. Play Safe.* — a league-wide health and safety initiative. At the heart of the initiative is a pledge of \$100 million in support for independent medical research and engineering advancements and a commitment to look at anything and everything to protect our players and make our game safer, including enhancements to medical protocols and improvements to how our game is taught and played. For more information about the NFL’s health and safety efforts, please visit www.PlaySmartPlaySafe.com.

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