

DogsBite.org

4742 42nd Avenue SW #267
Seattle, WA 98116

Commissioner Roger Goodell

National Football League
280 Park Avenue, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10017

July 23, 2009

Dear Commissioner Goodell:

DogsBite.org is a national dog bite victims group dedicated to reducing serious dog attacks by creating common sense laws. Through our work, we hope to protect both people and pets from future attacks.

My name is Colleen Lynn and I am the founder of this organization.

I am also the victim of a leashed pit bull attack. As I write to you today, on behalf of thousands of innocent victims of unprovoked pit bull attacks, I praise the team of ER doctors that were able to heal my right injured arm by embedding a 5-inch metal plate into it. Without the use of this arm, I would have been unable to develop the 1,500 page website DogsBite.org and the hundreds of U.S. contacts that make up our vital network. I write to you now concerning the possible reinstatement of Michael Vick to the National Football League.

The history of the National Football League and pit bulls stretches back to the 1920's with the "Fighting Bulldogs" of Canton, Ohio. The pit bull imagery was resurrected in 1985 after the success of the "Junkyard Dog Defense" used by the Chicago Bears. Since 2001, the NFL's association with pit bulls has led to increasing violence, including incidents with Michael Vick, James Harrison, Steve Foley, Jerome Mathis, Jonathan Babineaux, Tank Johnson, Joey Porter, LeShon Johnson and Thomas Hamner.

In the wake of Michael Vick and James Harrison -- whose pet pit bull unleashed a sudden, explosive attack on his 2-year old son and wife -- DogsBite.org asks that the NFL take a stand against the ownership of pit bulls by its players. The stand is simple: "The NFL forbids the ownership of pit bulls by its players." DogsBite.org also asks that Michael Vick expressly address the issue of "status" in a series of Public Service Announcements to drive this critical message home.

As recently portrayed on ESPN's show "Outside the Lines" (*Vick's Impact on Dogfighting* aired 07/19/2009), urban youth dogfighting is only part of the problem. The other part is owning and selling the "baddest" dog on the block. Both aspects ensure the continued proliferation of unstable pit bulls that wind up in our neighborhoods and city shelters from coast to coast. These often-volatile pit bulls, bred in backyards and black market venues, directly contribute to the alarming number of U.S. pit bull attacks, many of which end in disfiguring injury.

It is only by the NFL taking these two distinct actions that DogsBite.org can support the reinstatement of Michael Vick.

1. The NFL must take a stand that forbids the ownership of pit bulls by its players.
2. Through a series of Public Service Announcements to be televised on NFL games broadcast over the public airwaves and on cable, Vick must address the dangerousness of pit bulls and dissuade others from owning pit bulls in addressing this status issue as well.

Tough men do not need tough dogs

Earlier this year, the U.S. Army banned pit bulls and other dangerous dog breeds across all RCI base housing installations (40+ U.S. facilities) for the protection of children and family members. Shortly thereafter, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune adopted a similar policy. Lejeune base commanding officer Col. Richard P. Flatau Jr. was explicit in his language regarding the new policy: "These specific breeds present an unreasonable risk to the health and safety of our residents and are therefore prohibited."

Over 65 U.S. military bases, which produce some of the toughest American men of all, have now taken a stand against the ownership of pit bulls.

It is time for the National Football League to do the same.

DogsBite.org urges the NFL to formally take a stand against the ownership of pit bulls by its players and to once and for all sever "pit bull imagery" from this prized, All-American family pastime. The pit bull problem is nearly 30-years old Commissioner Goodell. In this time, pit bulls have inflicted serious and debilitating injury upon tens of thousands of U.S citizens, many of these victims being innocent children. In the instance of fatal attacks, during the 3-year period of 2006-2008 a pit bull killed an American every 21 days.

Please help us put a stop to these unnecessary injuries and deaths.

Colleen Lynn

Founder of DogsBite.org

Attached is the DogsBite.org 3-year fatality report.



DogsBite.org is a national dog bite victims group dedicated to reducing serious dog attacks by creating common sense laws. Through our work, we hope to protect both people and pets from future attacks. Our website, www.dogsbite.org, contains a wide collection of data to help policymakers and citizens learn about dangerous dogs. Our research focuses on pit bull type dogs. Due to selective breeding practices that emphasize aggression and tenacity, this class of dogs negatively impacts communities the most.