

Helmet Differences: Replica Vs. Authentic (mini and full size)

The plastic shell is different on the Authentic vs. the Replica mini helmet. The authentic helmet shell is the same polycarbonate plastic that is used on real full size pro helmets.

The Riddell full size replicas use a slightly smaller and less durable shell made of ABS plastic, and is not completely round like the high school varsity or pro helmets.

An Authentic mini can be just as dull in color as a replica mini at any given time. However, you can easily buff a replica to be as shiny as an Authentic. You can really create a nice shine on your helmets by using a product called, *Blue Magic Metal Polish Cream*.

The full size replicas also have plastic-coated glued-in foam to represent the interior padding; whereas, the full size authentic has separate air chamber pads inside the helmet shell. On the other hand, the authentic and the replica minis both have the same glued-in foam interior padding.

The replica helmet comes with a plastic facemask with coated vinyl, but the authentic facemasks are actually metal dipped in vinyl (i.e.: for mini and full size). Previous to late 2002, the replica mini used to come with a plastic mask without any the vinyl coating. Starting in 2002, Riddell created the "Z2B" vinyl-coated plastic mask, similar to the style that the pros wear today.

The minis with the NFL shield logo on the back are Riddell "Authentic", which cost anywhere from \$28-35 depending on which dealer you can get them from. The Riddell "Replicas" usually cost anywhere from \$15 to \$25. If you purchase a Riddell Revolution mini, you will get an authentic NFL shield logo and warning sticker, but you will pay about the same as a Riddell Authentic.

The side decals on a full size replica helmet are typically smaller than regulation size and these helmets also have a 2-point chinstrap on them instead of the customary 4-point chinstrap.

You can fit standard facemasks on replica shells. In addition, you can drill new 7/32-inch holes on the sides for additional chinstrap snaps to add high-hookup hard-cup chinstraps.

You will not be able to fit regulation interior padding to replica shells. In this case, it's just easier to buy a "VSR-4" or "Revolution" helmet instead.

When someone sells you an Authentic Mini, all you have to do is confirm with them that it is not a replica and ask what mask is on it; or make sure it is a "factory" authentic mini and not something that they modified on their own.

Buying a Riddell Authentic Mini is not worth the extra \$13-15 more just for a different plastic shell. Save this money for another replica when you can shine them up just the same. You may also be able to buy the NFL shield decal from other club members, if this is what you want to add to the rear of your helmets.

Riddell indicates that the plastic shell is different on the full size "Authentic" (or "*Proline*") Vs. the "Replica". These authentic "VSR-4" or "Revolution" helmets (polycarbonate shell) are the same models that are used by the pros and come with the NFL shield logo decal on the back. These helmets cost anywhere from \$160-225 depending on which dealer you buy from. The Riddell "Replicas" usually cost anywhere from \$50 to \$125.