

Minnesota Youth Soccer Association

Policy Relating to Concussion and Concussed Players

Preliminary Statement

The Minnesota Youth Soccer Association is adopting this policy as part of its obligation to provide a safe playing environment for its players.

Awareness of concussion and effects of concussion on players, especially youth players, has increased over the past decade. Medically, a concussion is a form of traumatic brain injury. Because it is a brain injury, a concussion is not a visible injury, such as a broken arm. It requires time to heal properly, involving both physical and mental rest. Consequences may include loss of coordination or memory, vision problems, learning issues and changes in emotions and behavior.

A concussion may result from a direct blow to the head or from an indirect blow to the body that causes various forces to affect the brain within the skull. Signs and symptoms may appear immediately or may be noticed hours or days (or longer) later. There are a wide variety of symptoms which are possible. Loss of consciousness is not required to be diagnosed with a concussion. Adolescents require more time to recover from concussions than adults.

The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention has established the **HEADS UP: Concussion in Youth Sports** program and tool kit to provide training to coaches, athletes and parents regarding concussions. The Minnesota Legislature passed legislation (MN Statute 121A.37 and 121A.38) in 2011 regarding youth athletes, concussions and return to play.

Application

The Minnesota statute requires any nonprofit organization that organizes a youth athletic activity for which a fee is charged to meet the requirements of the statute. Accordingly, it is recommended that all MYSA Affiliate Member Clubs adopt the provisions of this policy to comply with the statute. This policy does apply to all MYSA coaches, officials and players who are involved in MYSA activities, including but not limited to such programs as ODP, TOPSoccer, MYSA camps and coaching clinics involving any youth player.

The statute specifically applies to participating coaches and officials. Officials include referees, assistant referees and fourth officials. Furthermore, MYSA recommends that this policy apply to team managers and anyone else receiving an MYSA pass.

Pre-Season Requirements

Coaches and officials are required to take the free CDC online training course *Concussion Training for Coaches*, www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html (click here to take the training, which is located in the middle of the webpage and takes approximately 45 minutes) before they may coach or officiate for the first time starting with the 2011/2012 season and once every three years thereafter. The certificate of completion at the end of the training is proof the course has been taken. Parents and athletes may take the course for their own information.

Parents, players, coaches and officials should print more information about the nature and risks of concussions from the CDC at www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html and click on the appropriate link for fact sheets for parents, athletes and coaches/officials (located about two-thirds the way down the webpage).

Season Requirements

Coaches during practices and coaches or officials during games shall remove a player from active participation in the practice or game if the player exhibits the signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion or is suspected of sustaining a concussion (MN Statue 121A.37(b)).

The player is not allowed to return to play until cleared in writing by a provider trained in evaluation and management of concussions (MN Statue 121A.37(c)).

The coach shall inform the parent/legal guardian about the possible concussion and the event surrounding the possible concussion (e.g.-collision, fall, etc.).

Post-Concussion Requirements

Currently being developed for possible future adoption.