

Springfield-South County Youth Club (SYC) Policy on Concussion Education & Training Program

Introduction

Pursuant to Senate Bill 172, the 2014 General Assembly amended the *Code of Virginia* to include § 22.1-271.5 directing the Board of Education to develop and distribute to school divisions by July 1, 2014, guidelines for policies dealing with concussions in student-athletes, and requiring all non-interscholastic youth sports programs (i.e. Springfield-South County Youth Club (SYC)) to develop policies and procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes.

In addition, the Student-Athlete Protection Act (SB 652) is to ensure that student-athletes who sustain concussions are properly diagnosed, given adequate time to heal, and are comprehensively supported until they are symptom free. According to the Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport (3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Zurich, November 2008), “the cornerstone of concussion management is physical and cognitive rest until symptoms resolve and then a graded program of exertion prior to medical clearance and return to play.”

The Brain Injury Association of Virginia notes that it is important for all education professionals to be aware of the issues surrounding brain injuries and how they can affect the student’s abilities in the educational setting. Resulting impairments can be multifaceted and can include cognitive, behavioral, and/or physical deficits. Impairments can be mild or severe, temporary or permanent, resulting in partial or total loss of function. Because these deficits are so varied and unpredictable, it is difficult to forecast the recovery for a student with a brain injury.

A **CONCUSSION** is a brain injury that is characterized by an onset of impairment of cognitive and/or physical functioning, and is caused by a blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head (i.e. a helmet to the head, being knocked to the ground). A concussion can occur with or without a loss of consciousness, and proper management is essential to the immediate safety and long-term future of the injured individual. A concussion can be difficult to diagnose, and failing to recognize the signs and symptoms in a timely fashion can have dire consequences.

Most athletes who experience a concussion can recover completely as long as they do not return to play prematurely. The effects of repeated concussions can be cumulative, and after a concussion, there is a period in which the brain is particularly vulnerable to further injury. If an athlete sustains another concussion during this period, the risk of permanent brain injury increases significantly and the consequences of a seemingly mild second concussion can be very severe, and even result in death (i.e., “second impact syndrome”).

SYC Policy and Procedures

1. SYC shall develop procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes. Consideration should also be given to addressing the academic needs and gradual reintroduction of cognitive demands for students who have been determined to have a concussion.
 - a. In order to participate in any SYC athletic activity, every SYC Staff member, student-athlete, and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis (every 12 months), information on concussions provided by SYC. After having reviewed the materials describing health effects of concussions, each SYC Staff member, student-athlete, and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall consent to acknowledging receipt, review, and understanding of such information. SYC will determine the proper procedures for ensuring that statements are distributed to and collected from each SYC Staff member, student-athlete, and his/her parent or guardian with appropriate credentials on an annual basis. Training requirements for SYC Staff Members, Student-Athletes and Parent(s)/Guardian(s) is found in Section A (below).
2. Any SYC student-athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion in a practice or game shall be removed from the activity immediately. An SYC student-athlete who has been removed from a practice or play, evaluated, and suspected to have a concussion shall not return to play until:
 - a. Evaluated by a licensed Health Care Provider¹ (HCP) and in receipt of written clearance to 'Return to Play'² from such licensed HCP. The licensed HCP evaluating student-athletes suspected of having a concussion or brain injury may be a volunteer.
 - b. SYC Staff members evaluating student-athletes at the time of injury will utilize a standardized concussion sideline assessment instrument (e.g., Sideline Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT-II), the Standardized Assessment of Concussion (SAC) and/or the Balance Error Scoring System (BESS) as these are examples of sideline concussion assessment tools that test cognitive function and postural stability).
 - c. 'Return to Play' protocol is described below in Section B (below).
3. An SYC Concussion Management Team will be established that will review and refine the SYC Concussion Management Policies and procedures on an annual basis. Participants on the Team will include, but not limited to: SYC Director, CETP; SYC Board of Director member(s); Sports Commissioners; Athletic Administrator(s), appropriate licensed HCP, as well as coaches, parents, and students (as appropriate).

¹ **APPROPRIATE LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROVIDER:** *Physician, physician assistant, osteopath or athletic trainer licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine; a neuropsychologist licensed by the Board of Psychology; or a nurse practitioner licensed by the Virginia State Board of Nursing.*

² **RETURN TO PLAY** *means authorization to participate in a non-medically supervised practice or athletic competition.*

A. Concussion Education & Training Required for SYC Staff members, Student-Athletes, and Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

1. SYC shall develop training to ensure SYC Staff members, student-athletes, and parents/guardians receive appropriate training on an annual basis with respect to:
 - a. How to recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion;
 - b. Strategies to reduce the risk of concussions;
 - c. How to seek proper medical treatment for a person suspected of having a concussion; and
 - d. When the athlete may safely return to the event or training.
2. The SYC Concussion Management Team shall ensure the CET is appropriate, current, and consistent with State and Local ordinances, as well as best practice protocols.
3. SYC shall maintain a tracking and accountability system to document compliance with the annual CET requirement for all members of SYC.
4. Annual training on concussion management shall use a reputable program such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Local County or school district Concussion Education and Training Program;
 - b. The Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) tools for youth and high school sports coaches, parents, athletes, and health care professionals provide important information on preventing, recognizing, and responding to a concussion, and are available at http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html.
 - c. The National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) online coach education course – *Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know*. This CDC-endorsed program provides a guide to understanding, recognizing and properly managing concussions in high school sports. It is available at www.nfhslearn.com.
 - d. The Oregon Center for Applied Science (ORCAS) ACTive® course, an online training and certification program that gives sports coaches the tools and information to protect players from sports concussions. Available at <http://activecoach.orcasinc.com/>, ACTive® is funded by the National Institutes of Health, developed by leading researchers, and validated in a clinical trial.
5. Requirement to Complete CET
 - a. SYC Staff Member: Prior to participating in any SYC practice, game, challenge, contest, or event must complete the "Staff" CET.
 - b. SYC Parent/Student-Athlete: Prior to participating in any SYC practice, game, challenge, contest, or event on or after 1 July 2015 every SYC parent and student-athlete must complete the age-appropriate CET.

B. Protocol for 'Return to Play'

1. No SYC student-athlete shall participate in any SYC athletic event or practice if he/she:
 - a. Exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors attributable to a concussion; or
 - b. Has been diagnosed with a concussion.

2. No SYC student-athlete, diagnosed with a concussion, shall return to participate in an SYC athletic event or training on the days after he/she experiences a concussion unless all of the following conditions have been met:
 - a. The student no longer exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, at rest or with exertion;
 - b. The student is asymptomatic during, or following periods of supervised exercise that is gradually intensifying; and
 - c. The student receives a written medical release from a licensed HCP.

CHAPTER 483

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered [22.1-271.5](#), relating to policies for student-athletes with concussions.

[S 652]

Approved April 11, 2010

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered [22.1-271.5](#) as follows:

§ [22.1-271.5](#). *Policies on concussions in student-athletes.*

A. The Board of Education shall develop and distribute to each local school division guidelines on policies to inform and educate coaches, student-athletes, and their parents or guardians of the nature and risk of concussions, criteria for removal from and return to play, and risks of not reporting the injury and continuing to play.

B. Each local school division shall develop policies and procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes. Such policies shall require:

1. In order to participate in any extracurricular physical activity, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information on concussions provided by the local school division. After having reviewed materials describing the short- and long-term health effects of concussions, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information, in a manner approved by the Board of Education; and

2. A student-athlete suspected by that student-athlete's coach, athletic trainer, or team physician of sustaining a concussion or brain injury in a practice or game shall be removed from the activity at that time. A student-athlete who has been removed from play, evaluated, and suspected to have a concussion or brain injury shall not return to play that same day nor until (i) evaluated by an appropriate licensed health care provider as determined by the Board of Education and (ii) in receipt of written clearance to return to play from such licensed health care provider.

The licensed health care provider evaluating student-athletes suspected of having a concussion or brain injury may be a volunteer.

C. In addition, local school divisions may provide the guidelines to organizations sponsoring athletic activity for student-athletes on school property. Local school divisions shall not be required to enforce compliance with such policies.

2. That the Board of Education, in developing the policies pursuant to subsection A of § [22.1-271.5](#), shall work with the Virginia High School League, the Department of Health, the Virginia Athletic Trainers Association, representatives of the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters and the Children's National Medical Center, the Brain Injury Association of Virginia, the

American Academy of Pediatrics, the Virginia College of Emergency Physicians and other interested stakeholders.

3. That the policies of the Board of Education developed pursuant to subsection A of § [22.1-271.5](#) shall become effective on July 1, 2011.

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