



# Concussion Awareness Program

Education, Understanding, Care



# Concussions

## **SYSA Concussion Information**

Concussions can be difficult to diagnose, in part because symptoms can be subtle. Sometimes you'll notice that your child may be unusually tired, they "just don't seem like themselves", or they're bothered by loud noises or bright lights. Other symptoms are more obvious, such as vomiting or the inability to answer questions. It's important to remember that your child may not be able to recognize and/or verbalize their own symptoms, especially if they are young. And to make it even more complicated, symptoms may not show up for hours or even days. For older children, they may intentionally hide their symptoms because they want to get back in the game or to appear "tough". The best preparation is to be informed. Please take the time to review the following.

## **Additional Information**

If a concussion is suspected - make sure your child is immediately removed from activity. **When in doubt, sit them out.** Don't allow anyone, young or old, to return to play without written medical authorization from a medical professional trained in the diagnosis and management of concussion.

## **Coaches: Contact a parent/guardian**

Many times symptoms will appear minutes, hours, or even days after an injury. Parents must know that their child may have suffered a concussion and the typical signs/symptoms. Most concussed athletes go home to parents who are ill-equipped to deal with a brain injury. Education is a must.

## **Return to play...gradually**

After all physical symptoms have resolved and a medical provider has give your child permission to return to play, an international panel of concussion experts recommends having them follow a gradual protocol that increases physical stress incrementally. This is a good way to make sure symptoms have truly resolved. If symptoms return during this process, it is likely that more healing time is required and you should consult your medical provider.





# Heading Rule

## Changes to Sudbury Soccer:

Players in 6<sup>th</sup> grade programs and younger shall not engage in heading, either in practices or in games.

Limited heading in practice for players in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade programs. More specifically, these players shall be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes of heading training per week, with no more than 15-20 headers per player, per week.

Referees should enforce these restrictions by age group according to the specified rules. Referees will not be assessing the age of individual players on the field; they will enforce the rules for the age group.

**In adherence to these new requirements, referees have been instructed by U.S. Soccer of the following rule addition:** *When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick (IFK) should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.*

**Modified substitution rules also took effect Jan. 1, 2016, as follows:** *Any player suspected of suffering a head injury may be substituted for evaluation without the substitution counting against the team's total number of allowed substitutions during the game.*





# Age Appropriate Guidelines

K-6<sup>th</sup> Grade should not participate in any heading activities as per the US Soccer Federation heading mandate.

At 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the introduction of heading should take a five step approach:

- Individual Heading of the Ball
- Heading in 2's
  - Receive, Pass, Score, Clearance
- Heading in a small sided game
- Heading in a finishing exercise to goal
- Heading in a match

## Safe Heading Technique

- On approach to ball be aware of surrounding
- Use arms for balance and protection from those around you
- Always look at the ball
- Head the ball with the fore-head
- Torso and head should move as one
- Generate power through momentum in the shoulders





# Concussion Policy

Sudbury Soccer recognizes the potential danger and long-term health consequences of this often difficult to diagnose form of traumatic brain injury. The Policy is intended to provide easy-to-understand guidelines related to players who have been diagnosed with or are suspected of having a concussion. The Policy is for Coaches, Parents and Players but is to be shared with any other adults or participants in Sudbury Soccer. Coaches\*

- Coaches, on their own time, will watch in its entirety at least once every two years one of the following two educational videos: o “Concussion in Sports – What you Need to Know” developed by The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) o “Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports Online Concussion Training” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) o When a Coach volunteers to coach (part of the player online registration process) the Coach will be required to answer Yes or No to a question “Have you completed one of the authorized Concussion Training videos in the past two years”
- Before each season, all Coaches will be given a copy of CDC’s “Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports, A Fact Sheet for Coaches” document or a similar document to be approved by Sudbury Soccer.
- Though a rare occurrence, if a Player becomes unconscious during a session, the Coach will call 911 or will instruct another adult to call 911. • When, during a session, a Player becomes unconscious or suspected of having a concussion the Coach will remove the Player from the activity for the remainder of the session. The Coach will keep the Player out even if the player insists “I’m OK now, Coach”.
- The Coach will inform the Player’s Parent or guardian of the Player’s symptoms as soon as possible. Ideally, the Parent will be notified immediately.
- When the Player returns for a future session if, based on the Coach’s understanding of concussion symptoms, the Coach suspects the player is still exhibiting symptoms, the Coach will keep the player from the activity. \* “Coaches” means all volunteer Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches Parents
- When a Parent registers their Player they will be required to check a box agreeing to the following: “If my child is diagnosed with a concussion during a Sudbury Soccer activity or during ANY OTHER ACTIVITY including those outside August, 2011 Sudbury Soccer, or if my player has a prior head injury, I will inform my child’s Coach of such diagnosis prior to the start of the season or before my child returns to play.”
- At the start of each season, Parents will receive an e-mail from Sudbury Soccer that includes: o A brief explanation of our policy and the importance of the Parent’s role in understanding it. An electronic copy of CDC’s “Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports, A Fact Sheet for Parents” document or a similar document to be approved by Sudbury Soccer.
- All Players U10 and older will be given a copy of CDC’s “Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports, A Fact Sheet for Players” document.
- All Players U12 and older will be asked to watch either of the approved education videos mentioned above at least once every two years.

