

AYSA Concussion/Serious Injury Policy 2013

Although it is the beautiful game, soccer is one of the leading sports when it comes to its players sustaining concussions.

In conjunction with the 2011 Pennsylvania Safety in Youth Sports Act and as dictated by the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Sports Association (EPYSA), AYSA has adopted the following:

1. Concussions and related injuries are serious matters and shall be treated as such.
2. ALL AYSA coaches shall take and pass the CDC online concussion awareness certification course.
3. The AYSA Board shall investigate any perceived improprieties regarding the handling of any concussion-related and/or serious injury.
4. Any coach, player and/or parent/guardian who is found not to have properly addressed a concussion and/or related/serious injury shall be subject to discipline, including suspension and dismissal.

Please Note: Any injury that takes a player out of a game/practice – and keeps them out of the game/practice – is a serious injury. IF a coach has legitimate concern about a player after an injury/suspected injury, he/she will not put a player back into a game/practice.

Any AYSA coach who believes a player has sustained a concussion and/or serious injury shall:

1. Immediately remove that player from the field.
2. Speak with that player's parent(s)/guardian(s) of the suspected injury immediately.
 - o Notify that player's parent(s)/guardian(s) formally of the suspected injury ASAP via the Injury Report.
3. Notify the appropriate AYSA Vice President (VP of Intramurals, Boys' Travel, or Girls' Travel) of the suspected injury via email.
4. Not allow that player return to play, either in practice or in a game, until that player's parent(s)/guardian(s) have signed and returned the Injury Report to the coach and the appropriate AYSA VP.

Explanation

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that disrupts normal functioning of the brain. A concussion can be caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Concussions are a type of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), which can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally functions.

- Most concussions do not involve loss of consciousness.
- Athletes who have, at any point in their lives, had a concussion have an increased risk of another concussion.
- Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults.
- You can sustain a concussion even if you do not hit your head.
 - A blow elsewhere on the body can transmit an “impulsive” force to the brain and cause a concussion.
- Signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury.

Concussions can cause significant and sustained neuropsychological impairment affecting problem solving, planning, memory, attention, concentration, and behavior.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 300,000 concussions are sustained during sports-related activities annually. Second-impact syndrome occurs when a person sustains a second concussion while still experiencing symptoms of a previous concussion. It can lead to severe impairment and even death of the victim.

The Pennsylvania Safety in Youth Sports Act signed into law in November of 2011 mandates measures to be taken in order to ensure the safety of athletes involved in sports in the state.

The signs of a concussion include:

- Appears dazed, stunned, or disoriented, demonstrates decreased alertness
- Forgets plays, or demonstrates short term memory difficulty
- Slurs words
- Exhibits difficulties with balance or coordination.
- Answers questions slowly or inaccurately.
- Exhibits seizures or vomiting
- Changes in level of consciousness. (Estimates are that <10% of concussions result in the loss of consciousness)

The symptoms of a concussion include:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double vision or changes in vision
- Sensitivity to light or sound/noise
- Feeling sluggish or foggy
- Difficulty with concentration and short term memory

- Sleep disturbance
- Irritability or changes in personality and behavior

Danger signs

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body s/he exhibits any of the following danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other.
- Is drowsy or cannot be awakened.
- A headache that not only does not diminish, but gets worse.
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination.
- Repeated vomiting or nausea.
- Slurred speech.
- Convulsions or seizures.
- Cannot recognize people or places.
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated.
- Has unusual behavior.
- Loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously).

Why should an athlete report their symptoms?

- If an athlete has a concussion, his/her brain needs time to heal. While an athlete's brain is still healing, she/he is much more likely to have another concussion.
- Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes to recover.
- In rare cases, repeat concussions in young athletes can result in brain swelling or permanent damage to their brain. They can even be fatal.

What should an athlete do if they think they have a concussion?

- **Don't hide it.** Tell your coach or parent/guardian.
- **Report it.** Don't return to competition or practice with symptoms of a concussion or head injury. The sooner you report it, the sooner you may return to play.
- **Take time to recover.** If you have a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is healing you are much more likely to sustain a second concussion. Repeat concussions can cause permanent brain injury.

What should you as a parent/guardian do if you think your athlete has a concussion?

- If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, notify your coach and seek medical attention.
- Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself.
- Keep your athlete out of play until an experienced health care professional says she/he is symptom-free and it's okay to return to play.
- Rest is the key to helping an athlete recover from a concussion.
- Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games, may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse.
- Remember that after a concussion returning to sports and school is a gradual process that should be carefully managed and monitored by a health care professional.

What can happen if an athlete continues to play with a concussion or returns to play too soon?

- Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the athlete vulnerable to second impact syndrome.
- Second impact syndrome is when an athlete sustains a second concussion while still having symptoms from a previous concussion or head injury.
- Second impact syndrome can lead to severe impairment and even death in extreme cases.

Injury Report

Date:

Name of injured player:

Coach in charge when incident occurred:

Team:

Field:

Practice ___ Game ___

Body Part Injured: Left Right N/A

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head | <input type="checkbox"/> Neck | <input type="checkbox"/> Finger | <input type="checkbox"/> Foot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eye | <input type="checkbox"/> Back | <input type="checkbox"/> Thumb | <input type="checkbox"/> Toe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ear | <input type="checkbox"/> Chest | <input type="checkbox"/> Thigh | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheek | <input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder | <input type="checkbox"/> Knee | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nose | <input type="checkbox"/> Elbow | <input type="checkbox"/> Leg | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chin | <input type="checkbox"/> Arm | <input type="checkbox"/> Shin | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mouth | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrist | <input type="checkbox"/> Ankle | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tooth | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Description of incident:

First Aid administered:

I have received and understand the injury:

Player Parent/Guardian Date

Player in my care may resume play:

Player Parent/Guardian Date