

South Baltimore Youth Soccer League

CONCUSSION POLICY

1) DEFINITIONS

- a) 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. A concussion typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurologic function that resolves spontaneously. A concussion may result in neuropathological changes, but the acute clinical symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than structural injury. 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.
- b) An **appropriate licensed health care provider** means a licensed physician or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and management.
- c) **Return to play** means to participate in a non-medically supervised practice or athletic competition.
- d) **Youth athlete** means a participant in a youth athletic activity who is five years or older and under 19 years of age.
- e) **Cleared to participate** means that the youth athlete has been symptom free for 48 hours, or more, and has been released to return to play by an appropriate licensed healthcare provider as defined above. Such release to return to play **MUST** be in writing.

2) SIGNS / SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

The common signs / symptoms of a concussion include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Appears dazed or stunned;
- b) Confusion about an assignment / position;
- c) Headache or pressure in head;
- d) Is unsure of games, score or opponent;
- e) Nausea or vomiting;
- f) Balance problems or dizziness;
- g) Double or blurry vision;
- h) Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy;
- i) Sensitivity to light;
- j) Concentration or memory problems;
- k) Sensitivity to noise;
- l) Answers questions slowly;
- m) Forgets an instruction;
- n) Moves clumsily;
- o) Loss of consciousness;

- p) Mood, behavior, personality changes; and
- q) Loss of memory;
- r) Inability to recall events before/after injury.

3) MANDATED COURSE OF ACTION

- a) The following mandated course of action shall apply to all sports competitions and sports related activities occurring at the Town of Hamburg Parks and Recreation facilities:
 - i) If a youth athlete experiences or exhibits any of the above signs / symptoms of a concussion following an injury, contact event, or blow to the head, face, neck or a blow to the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head, he or she shall be immediately removed from the athletic event, game, practice or contest and shall not return to play until he or she is cleared to participate by an appropriate licensed health care professional. (WHEN IN DOUBT, KEEP THEM OUT!)
 - ii) The youth athlete's parent or guardian shall be notified that:
 - (1) He or she experienced an injury, contact event, or blow to the head, face, neck, or a blow to the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head, and/or that he or she exhibited one or more signs / symptoms of a concussion.
 - (2) That he or she was immediately removed from the athletic event, game, practice or contest; and
 - (3) That he or she may not return to play until he or she is cleared to participate by an appropriate licensed health care professional. (See Paragraph iv.)
 - iii) Any youth athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate licensed health care professional within 24 hours of the injury, contact event, or blow to the head, face, neck, or a blow to the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head.
 - iv) No youth athlete shall be permitted to return to play until he or she has not exhibited the signs / symptoms of a concussion for 48 hours, or more, and is medically cleared to participate by an appropriate licensed health care professional. The coach or recreation staff must receive written permission from an appropriate licensed health care professional before the youth athlete may return to play.

4) MANDATED TRAINING FOR ALL COACHES

- a) All SBYSL coaches, instructors, and officials must be knowledgeable regarding the signs/symptoms of a concussion, appropriate strategies to reduce the risk of concussions, how to seek proper medical treatment for a youth athlete suspected of having a concussion, and when the athlete may safely return to play.
- b) All coaches, instructors, and officials are required to complete the free, online course on concussion management entitled HEADS UP to Youth Sports: Online Concussion Training offered through the CDC for free and found at <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/>.
- c) Upon completion of this online training session, all coaches shall obtain the completion certificate evidencing same, and provide the certificate to SBYSL as instructed by the league.

5) ROLE OF COACHING STAFF / GAME OFFICIALS / COMPLIANCE

- a) Coaches:

- i) Coaches and instructors will NOT be expected to “diagnose” a concussion, as that is the job of an appropriate licensed health care professional. Coaches and instructors shall use their best judgment in observing the signs / symptoms of a concussion, and in taking the action mandated by this Policy in the event that a youth athlete experiences or exhibits any of the signs / symptoms of a concussion following an injury, contact event, or blow to the head, face, neck or body.
- b) Game Officials:
 - i) Game officials will NOT be expected to “diagnose” a concussion, as that is the job of an appropriate licensed health care professional. Game officials shall use their best judgment in observing the signs / symptoms of a concussion in the event that a youth athlete experiences or exhibits any of the signs / symptoms of a concussion following an injury, contact event, or blow to the head, face, neck or body. If a game official observes questionable signs, symptoms, or behavior that is consistent with a concussion, the game official shall notify the head coach (or an assistant coach if the head coach is not available) and remove the participant from the games for further evaluation.
 - ii) A game official is not responsible for the sideline evaluation or management of the youth athlete after he or she is removed from play. The responsibility of further evaluation and management of the suspected symptomatic youth athlete falls upon the coach (head and/or assistant), and/or an appropriate licensed health care professional.
- c) Compliance:
 - i) Any coach, instructor, or official who disregards the safety and well-being of a youth athlete as it relates to this Concussion Policy will be immediately suspended from coaching SBYSL youth athletic events.
 - ii) Additionally, any coach, instructor, or official who misuses this policy to prohibit an otherwise healthy, fit, uninjured player from participating in a youth athletic sporting event, practice or competition will be immediately suspended from coaching with SBYSL.