

MSYSA Supports Implementation Guidelines for U.S. Soccer's Player Safety Campaign

Concussion initiatives & heading for youth players

Glen Burnie, MD (March 17, 2016): The Maryland State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA) supports the implementation guidelines as set in place by U.S. Soccer's [Recognize to Recover Player Safety Campaign](#) and as supported by US Youth Soccer's Director of Coaching, Sam Snow, specifically as it relates to concussion initiatives and heading for youth players. As such, the following requirements take effect immediately:

- Players younger than eleven (11) years of age shall not engage in heading, either in practices or in games.
- Limited heading in practice for players eleven (11) and twelve (12) years of age. 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.
- Clubs should be aware of circumstances in which individual consideration is needed. For example:
 - A 10 year old playing at U-12 or older should not head the ball at all.
 - An 11 or 12 year old playing at U-14 or older should abide by the heading restrictions in practice.
- 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.

Leagues and organizations are free to set their own standards, as long as the minimum requirements outlined above are met.

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.

All sanctioned tournaments being held within the state of Maryland are required to follow the above. Teams traveling outside of Maryland to participate in tournaments should inquire with the tournament leadership about their specific heading policies.

RESOURCES:

Please click on the following links to learn more about this U.S. Soccer initiative:

[Recognize to Recover web page](#)

[U.S. Soccer Player Safety Campaign FAQs](#)

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