



## **SCSL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING THE IDENTIFICATION AND HANDLING OF SUSPECTED CONCUSSIONS IN YOUTH ATHLETES**

Welcome to the Shenandoah County Soccer League Concussion Information form. Here you can find everything you need to know about the Club's Concussion Management, Education and Reporting protocols, as mandated by the [Virginia Youth Soccer Association](#), to achieve the following objectives:

1. Reduce concussion risks for participants;
2. Increase awareness among coaches and families of concussion risks and effects, and proper management of concussion; and
3. Comply with Virginia State Laws regarding policies and procedures for concussion management in youth athletes.

### **Definitions(s)**

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 ball 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 a second 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").

Appropriate licensed health care provider means a 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.

**Return to play means participate in a supervised practice or athletic competition.**

# Shenandoah County Soccer League Concussion Management and Reporting Policy

**I.** In order to participate in any SCSL sports activity, each youth athlete and the youth athlete's parent or guardian shall review and acknowledge, on an annual basis, the current SCSL Concussion Information Statement. Youth athletes and their parents/guardians also are encouraged to review information on concussions provided by the Concussion Education Online Verification Program of the Shenandoah County Public Schools ([http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/guidance/health/2015\\_guidelines\\_concussions\\_in\\_student\\_athletes.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/guidance/health/2015_guidelines_concussions_in_student_athletes.pdf)) or substantially equivalent program (i.e., CDC's free online program available at <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html> ). After having reviewed such materials describing the short- and long-term health effects of concussions, each youth athlete and the youth athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt and review of the SCSL Concussion Information Statement; and

**II.** In order to participate in any SCSL sports activity, each coach, assistant coach, and athletic trainer shall review on an annual basis, information on concussions provided by that adult volunteer's youth sport association, if applicable, or a substantially equivalent program for coaches (i.e., CDC's <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/coach.html> ).

**III.** A youth athlete suspected by that youth athlete's coach, athletic trainer, referee or other SCSL adult volunteer of sustaining a concussion or brain injury in a practice or game shall be removed from the activity at that time. A youth 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 defined below) and (ii) in receipt of written clearance to return to play from such licensed health care provider.

**IV. A.** When a coach and/or team official suspects a concussion event (**either witnessed by or reported to a coach and/or team official**), the coach/team official **MUST** take the following steps;

1. The player shall be removed from play for evaluation.
2. A coach, team official, Club representative, trainer or medical professional must evaluate and report the player's condition by completing and returning the Club's Concussion Reporting Form.
3. The player shall be barred from further participation that day. The VYSA policy regarding concussion is "When In Doubt, Sit It Out."
4. The player may return to athletic activity only when a licensed healthcare provider has provided written clearance via the Return to Play Form for the player. Such notification can be provided by emailing the clearance form to [scslconcussion@gmail.com](mailto:scslconcussion@gmail.com), or by mail to Shenandoah County Soccer League, ATTN: Concussion Reporting, P.O. Box 765 Woodstock, VA 22664. Shenandoah County Soccer League will maintain records of these medical clearances for no less than seven (7) years.

## **B. What Should You Do If You Think Your Child Has a Concussion?**

**1. Seek Medical Attention Right Away.** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is, and when it is safe for your child to return to regular activities, including sports.

**2. Keep Your Child Out of Play.** Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon – while the brain is still healing – risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Repeat or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.

**3. Tell Your Child's Coach About Any Previous Concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a previous concussion. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

## **V. Protocol for return to play**

**A.** No member of a youth athletic team shall participate in any athletic event or practice the same day he or she is injured and:

- 1.** exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors attributable to a concussion; or
- 2.** has been diagnosed with a concussion.

**B.** No member of a youth athletic team shall return to participate in a youth sports event or training on the days after he/she experiences a concussion unless all of the following conditions have been met:

- 1.** the youth no longer exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, at rest or with exertion;
- 2.** the youth is asymptomatic during, or following periods of supervised exercise that is gradually intensifying; and
- 3.** the youth receives a written medical release from a licensed health care provider and returned the written clearance via the Return to Play Form to the League.

The Zurich Consensus Statement (November 2008) return to play guidelines and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Concussion Guidelines (August 2010), are available online to assist healthcare providers, student athletes and their families, and school divisions, as needed.

## **VI. Training required for personnel and volunteers**

**A.** SCSL shall ensure that all SCSL coaches, assistant coaches and athletic trainers receive current training annually on:

- 1.** how to recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion;
- 2.** strategies to reduce the risk of concussions;
- 3.** how to seek proper medical treatment for a person suspected of having a concussion; and
- 4.** when the youth athlete may safely return to the event or training.

**B.** The SCSL concussion policy management team shall ensure training is current and consistent with best practice protocols.

**C.** SCSL shall maintain a tracking system to document compliance with the annual training requirement.

**D.** Annual training on concussion management shall use a reputable program such as, but not limited to, the following:

**1.** 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/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html>. These include Heads Up to Schools: Know Your Concussion ABCs; Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports; and Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports.

**2.** 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](http://www.nfhslearn.com).

**3.** 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.