



VYSA Concussion Management Policy

This policy, adopted by the Board of Directors of the Virginia Youth Soccer Association, sets forth minimum requirements for member clubs (clubs with rec only, clubs that have travel and rec and travel only clubs that are members through leagues) to adopt concussion management programs to manage concussion injuries among player participants in their programs and activities, beginning no later than January 1, 2016. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit member clubs from adopting concussion management programs with greater requirements than specified herein.

Objectives:

1. Reduce concussion risks for participants in VYSA member club programs;
2. Increase awareness of concussion risks, concussion effects, and their proper management for participants in VYSA member club programs;
3. Comply with Virginia State law, which requires youth sports programs utilizing public school properties to establish policies and procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in youth athletes;
4. Reduce legal risks to VYSA and its member clubs.

I. Education

A. Each member club of VYSA shall provide each coach, on an annual basis, information on the nature and risk of concussions, criteria for removal and return to play, and risks of not reporting the injury and continuing to play. The club shall require each coach to sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information and maintain such record for no less than seven years. Clubs are encouraged, but not required, to have coaches certify completion of the online concussion training and follow-up quiz provided by the Centers for Disease Control at: <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training>, or to provide coaches an opportunity for in person training by a licensed medical provider familiar with concussion issues in youth sports.

B. Each member club of VYSA shall provide the parents or guardians of each youth participant, on an annual basis, information on the nature and risk of concussions, criteria for removal and return to play, and risks of not reporting the injury and continuing to play. The club shall require each parent or guardian to sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information and maintain such record for no less than seven years.

C. For purposes of meeting the requirements of this section, a member club may provide coaches and parents with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) concussion fact sheets for coaches and parents found at the CDC "HEADS UP To Youth Sports" website: <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/index.html>. Nothing in this policy prohibits a member club from using some other suitable source of concussion information.

D. As part of this policy on concussion education, VYSA encourages, but does not require, member clubs to provide other means of periodically providing information on concussions to their coaches, players and parents, including meetings, seminars, discussion forums, online resources, handouts and other forms of communication.

II. Head Impact Protocol

A. Each member club of VYSA shall have a protocol in place to govern procedures for any situation in which a participant in the club's athletic programs or activities (including games, practices, skill sessions and other athletic activities) is suspected of having incurred a potential concussion as a result of a head or neck impact or other impact that could lead to a concussion.

B. Such protocol shall, at a minimum, set forth (i) a procedure for immediate removal of the player participant from the activity to be evaluated for symptoms of a concussion; (ii) a procedure for a coach, team official, club representative, trainer or medical professional to evaluate the player participant for symptoms of a concussion; and (iii) a requirement that the player participant not be permitted to return to play or any other athletic activity on that day if the player participant exhibits any symptoms of a concussion. VYSA policy regarding concussion is: "when in doubt, sit it out."

III. Return to Play

A. If a player participant in a member club's activities is removed from play due to exhibiting symptoms of a concussion, he or she may not return to any athletic activity of the club until a licensed healthcare provider has provided the club with written clearance for the player participant to resume such activities. This provision does not prohibit a player participant from attending games, practices and other activities without participating athletically in such activities.

B. A member club of VYSA is required to maintain records of medical clearances for seven years.

C. For purposes of this provision, a "licensed healthcare provider" means a physician, physician assistant, osteopath physician, 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. Although not required, VYSA recommends that its member clubs encourage players with suspected concussions to see a licensed healthcare professional with significant experience treating concussions, and further recommends that its member clubs provide their players, parents and coaches with information concerning licensed healthcare providers in their locales who have such experience.

IV. Baseline Testing

A. It is VYSA policy to encourage, but not require, member clubs to adopt a program of baseline testing for older player participants to facilitate the return to play when a concussion occurs.

B. Baseline testing is an exam conducted by trained professionals to help assess a person's brain functioning (including learning and memory skills, ability to pay attention or concentrate, and how quickly a person thinks and solves problems) at a given point in time. The results of such a test can be compared to a similar exam if a concussion has occurred, to help evaluate whether the injured player is ready to return to play.

C. VYSA recommends that member clubs establish procedures for player participants to obtain baseline testing starting as early as age 10, with periodic re-testing as player participants grow older.

V. Reporting Requirements

Each member club shall annually provide a copy of its Concussion Management Policy to the State Office no later than October 31 of each year starting in 2016.

VI. Policies Governing VYSA Player Participants and Model Information to Member Clubs

A. The VYSA Board hereby directs VYSA staff to develop a concussion management program, consistent with this policy, applicable to all youth player participants in VYSA programs and activities, including ODP and Academy programs, to be effective no later than January 1, 2016.

B. The VYSA Board hereby directs VYSA staff to assemble materials, including examples of satisfactory concussion management programs and educational materials, to be made available to member clubs to assist them in formulating and periodically updating their concussion management programs in compliance with this policy.

VII. Appendix

The following material helped inform the VYSA Board in formulating this policy:

CDC – Heads Up Program - <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html>

Concussion Recognition and Response (CRR)
http://www4.parinc.com/Products/Product.aspx?ProductID=CRR_APP
PAR-CRR app

Care: Sport App for trainers, medical personnel
http://www4.parinc.com/Products/Product.aspx?ProductID=CARE_APP

Sports Concussion Institute <http://www.concussiontreatment.com/concussionfacts.html>

Think Taylor – Organization started by Taylor Twellman to assist with education of the public concerning traumatic head injuries (concussions) <http://www.thinktaylor.org/>