



**RECOGNIZE TO
RECOVER**

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR U.S. SOCCER'S PLAYER SAFETY CAMPAIGN: CONCUSSION INITIATIVES & HEADING FOR YOUTH PLAYERS

- The Federation is recommending, and US Youth Soccer is **requiring** immediately, new rules as it relates to heading, as follows:
- Players in **11U programs and younger shall not engage in heading**, either in practices or in games. This means 11 years of age and younger!
- **Limited heading** in practice for players in 12U and 13U programs. 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 12U or older should not head the ball at all.**
 - A 12 year old playing at 13U or 14U 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.**
- **In adherence to these new requirements, 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.*
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- US Youth Soccer strongly recommends that all coaches, staff members, parents and players watch [U.S. Soccer's concussions in soccer overview video](#)