



Charles County Recreation, Parks, and Tourism
Southern Maryland Youth Soccer League (S.M.Y.S.L)
Guidelines
Revised 3/31/2022

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I. THE LEAGUE:

- A. **Mission:** To enhance the quality of life of our residents and visitors by providing well rounded recreational and competitive sports programs focusing on building a sense of community and improving the overall quality of life for current and future generations.
- B. **Philosophy:** The Southern Maryland Youth Soccer League (SMYSL) is first and foremost intended to provide a positive social experience for young boys and girls with an emphasis placed on good sportsmanship, fun, and exercise. The soccer league was formed to provide an outdoor soccer program to help our youth refine their skills and further the advancement of all players. These guidelines will govern practices and matches at all times.
- C. **Administration:** All leagues will operate under the jurisdiction of the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism in partnership with the SMYSL Advisory Board. Questions and concerns should be brought to the SMYSL League Director's attention for review.

II. Coaches

A. Head and Assistant Coaches will be responsible for the following:

- Inform team members and parents about all information pertaining to the league (rules, regulations, schedules, etc.)
- Ensure all roster information, including assistant coaches' names and phone numbers, remain current throughout the season. Changes must be reported immediately to the organization's advisory board representative.
- Ensure all players meet the eligibility requirements, including but not limited to player's age and roster minimums/maximums.
- **Participate in the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Coaches Certification program, including completion of a Criminal Background Investigation, and adhering to the National Alliance of Youth Sports (NAYS) Coaches Code of Ethics.**
- NAYS Certification Fees and Criminal Background Checks for each Head Coach will be paid for by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism (covered through League Franchise Fees).
- For NAYS insurance purposes, a NAYS certified coach 16-17 years of age must be coaching under the supervision of a certified coach 18 years or older. NAYS certification is not available for coaches under the age of 16.
- **Recreation, Parks, & Tourism's Code of Conduct- Distribute and collect signatures from each player's parent/guardian and return to league president. Enforce the Code of Conduct at practice and matches.**
- Coaches are reminded that administering any type of drug to players is absolutely prohibited.
- Adhere to the Charles County Public School no smoking policy while on school grounds. Including E-Cigarettes.
- Misconduct displayed by a team official or coach, can be shown a yellow or red card. If an offender cannot be identified, the head coach in the technical area receives the yellow or red card.

III. Team Memberships

- A. All players must be registered.
- B. Players may only be rostered on one team.

- C. Players must be between the ages of 4 and 18 years old.
- D. 18-year old's are eligible to play as long as they are enrolled in high school. Players that have graduated early and are 17 years or younger may participate as long as they are not currently playing collegiate soccer
- E. Written notice must be received from the Organization's Advisory Board representative when a player has withdrawn from the respective organization once the season has started.
- F. All teams will consist of a minimum and maximum roster size. See section IV. Program Format
- G. Players must play within the appropriate age division: see section IV. Program Format.
- H. Players may be allowed to play up one age group but cannot play down in age.
- I. Players should be distributed evenly among teams according to age, gender, and experience.
 - To effectively distribute players evenly amongst teams, annual player assessments should be conducted.
 - The organization's board, including the President, Vice President, and Coaching Director should coordinate efforts to properly place players on teams to provide an equal distribution of talent between all teams within a division.
- J. Residency
 - Players who move from one area to another once the season begins must finish the season where they started. These players cannot be placed on another team.

IV. PROGRAM FORMAT:

- A. Seasonally, league formats will be determined and maybe adjusted due to player registration and team counts. The SMYSL League Director will have final say on any league format adjustments. See below for traditional league format.

B. Division Breakdown

Division Breakdown
Boys: U8, U10, U12, U15
Girls: U8, U10, U12, U15
Co-Ed U6, U19

C. Age Division Formats

Age Division Formats	
U6	Four-On-A-Side, Small Overlay Field
U8	Five-On-A-Side, Small Field
U10	Seven-On-A-Side, Youth Field
U12	Nine-On-A-Side, Intermediate Field
U15, U19	Eleven-On-A-Side, Regulation Field

D. Minimum/Maximum Roster Size

Minimum/Maximum Roster Size		
U6	Min: 8	Max: 12
U8	Min: 8	Max: 10
U10	Min: 10	Max: 12
U12	Min: 12	Max: 16
U15/U19	Min: 14	Max: 20

V. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY:

- A.** All ages for divisions will be determined by the U.S. Youth Soccer Birth Year & Season Matrix. [us_soccer_birth_year_and_season_matrix1.pdf \(usyouthsoccer.org\)](https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/us_soccer_birth_year_and_season_matrix1.pdf)

SMYSL Age Group Birth Years (Fall 2021/Spring 2022)
U6: 2016-2017
U8: 2014-2015
U10: 2012-2013
U12: 2010-2011
U15: 2007-2009
U19: 2003-2006

- B.** Any organization that plays a non-rostered or illegal player will automatically forfeit all matches that the illegal player(s) participated in. In addition:
- Any violations of the player eligibility rule may result in the organization's president, coach and/or player(s) being suspended for the remainder of the season.
- C.** At the coach's discretion, a player who misses practice or has conduct issues with their team may be withheld playing time. Prior to administering limited playing time, coaches must first:
- Inform their Organization's President of the conduct or attendance issues.
 - The Organization's President will communicate with the League Director about any conduct or attendance issues.
 - The League Director must approve any playing time restrictions prior to imposing them on the player.
- D. Select Player Status**

- Any player who is currently participating in a Rec Plus, Select or Travel program shall be considered as select player status.
- Select players must be distributed as evenly as possible among teams in each individual age division, per association.
- Team rosters must include whether a player is of recreational or select status.

Select Player's Per Roster	
U8	2 Players
U10/U12	3 Players
U15/U19	4 Players

VI. EJECTIONS/SUSPENSIONS

A. Consequences for suspensions/ejections will be decided by the SMYSL League Director based upon a 3 Tier system. Anyone suspended may not attend any match or practice sites until their suspension has been fulfilled.

- Tier One: 2 Match Suspension

a) A Tier One offense may be issued to any player, parent, coach, or spectator who:

- Is ejected from a match or asked to leave a match or practice site by an official or Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism staff member for harassment, obscene gestures or language, or any other unsportsmanlike behavior. The result of these actions may result in a 2-match suspension, effective immediately, starting with your team's next scheduled match.
- Any further ejections may result in suspension from the league.

- Tier Two: Suspension for Remainder of the Season

a) Players may be suspended from the league and all Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism sports programs for the remainder of the season.

b) A Tier Two offense may be issued at the discretion of the SMYSL League Director to any player, coach, or spectator who:

- Committed multiple Tier One offenses within the same season.
- Strike, shove, bump, trip, or threaten an official, player, coach, spectator, Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff member or league official during or after a match on Charles County Community Center, Public School, or Park property.

- Tier Three: 2 Year Suspension

a) Anyone involved in a Tier Three offense may be suspended from the league and all Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism sports programs for a minimum of two years.

b) A Tier Three offense may be issued, with discretion from the SMYSL League Director to any player, parent, coach, spectator who:

- Commits multiple Tier One or Tier Two offenses within one year of previous offenses.
- Is involved in a severe incident that displays excessive or relentless disobedience of our mission, including but not limited to; harassment, fighting, or conduct with intent to harm an official, player, coach, spectator, Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff member or league official during or after a match, on Charles County Community Center, Public School, or Park property.

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE MATCH RULES:**A. Starting the Match:**

- A ten (10) minute grace period shall be observed.
- As soon as the minimum is achieved, the match must start (prior to the grace period elapsing).
- If a team starts the match with the minimum number of players, and that team falls below the minimum number for any reason other than an injury, the match will be terminated, and that team will forfeit the match.
- If a team falls below the minimum players due to an injury, the injured player will be given a 10-minute grace period to return before the match is forfeited.

B. Minimum Number of Players to Start a Match:

- **U6:** A minimum of four (4) players per team are needed to start a match.
- **U8:** A minimum of five (5) players per team are needed to start a match.
- **U10:** A minimum of six (6) players per team are needed to start a match.
- **U12:** A minimum of seven (7) players per team are needed to start a match.
- **U15, U19:** A minimum of nine (9) players per team are needed to start a match.

C. Field of Play: The following age divisions shall play on the designated field.

	Field of Play
U6	120' Long x 90' Wide (Pee Wee Field)
U8	150' Long x 90' Wide (Small Field)
U10	185' Long x 130' Wide (Youth Field)
U12	200' Long x 130' Wide (Intermediate Field)
U15, U19	320' Long x 170' Wide (Regulation Field)

D. Spectator, Player, & Coaching Locations/Regulations:

- Spectator Line
 - A solid line two yards outside of and parallel to the sideline. All coaches, players, and spectators must stay clear of the lane to provide a safety area for all concerned. The official linesman must operate in this corridor.
- Spectator/Player Sideline
 - Spectators will occupy one sideline.
 - Players and coaches from both teams occupy the other sideline.
 - Spectator and player/coach's sidelines at each match location will be determined prior to the start of the season.
 - Coaches and spectators are not permitted to sit/stand behind goals from one corner flag to the other on each end line.
- Coaching Area
 - Coaches and players are to be located within ten yards in either direction of the mid-field line.
 - Coaching will be limited to this area.
 - Persistent violation of this rule will result in a caution and possible disqualification.
 - Solid lines five yards long and perpendicular to the spectator line will denote this area.

E. Goal Area: The following goal areas will be used for the respective leagues.

	Goal Area
U6	9' Radius Semi circle
U8	3 yards X 12 yards (9' x 36')
U10	4½ yards X 9 yards (13.5' x 27')
U12	6 yards X 20 yards (18' x 60')
U15, U19	320' Long x 170' Wide (Regulation Field)

F. Goal Sizes:

	Goal Sizes
U6	6' W x 4' H
U8	4.50' W x 9' H
U10, U12	19' W x 7' H
U15, U19	24'W x 8' H

G. Duration of Match:

- Matches will be played in halves; except U6 & U-8, which will be played in quarters.
- Half-time will not exceed ten (10) minutes.
- Match Times will be as follows:
 - U6: (4)-10-minute quarters.
 - U8: (4)-10-minute quarters.
 - U10/12: (2)-25-minute halves.
 - 15: (2)-30-minute halves.
 - U19: (2)-35-minute halves.

H. Equipment

- Shin Guards are MANDATORY for match and practice participation in all age groups.
- Eye Glasses: Players wearing glasses must secure them with a strap.
- No metal belt buckles allowed.
- Jewelry will not be worn by any participant.
- Casts of any kind are not allowed.
- No protective gear of any kind can be worn unless approved by the SMYSL League Director.
- Undershirts can be multi-colored/patterned if they are exactly the same as the shirt sleeve
- Corner flags will be used in all age groups and divisions.
- Referee examination of player's equipment prior to the match is mandatory.
- The following equipment items are approved for use during the current season.

<u>Ball Sizes:</u>
U6-U8 #3 Ball
U10-U12 #4 Ball
U15-U19 #5 Ball

- Uniforms
 - Home teams must wear scrimmage vests if a color conflict exists.
 - The Goalie must wear a jersey with colors which distinguish him/her from the players of both teams and from the referee.
- Footwear:
 - Players must wear sneakers or shoes with molded cleats.
- No street shoes of any type are permitted.

I. Mandatory Play & Substitution Rules:

- There is no limit on the number of substitutions.
- Substitutions may be made, with the approval of the referee, with the following regulations:
 - All substitutes must enter the field of play from the mid-field line upon stoppage of play.
 - A player who is being substituted must exit the field at the nearest point on the boundary line, unless otherwise directed by the referee.
 - Players entering the field of play shall wait until the substituted player exits.
 - No substitute for a disqualified player.
 - The official must be notified only when substituting the goalkeeper.

J. Substitutions may be made at the following times:

- Prior to a throw-in by the team in possession.
- Prior to a goal kick by either team.
- After a goal by either team.
- After an injury, by either team, when the referee stops play.
- At half-time.

VIII. MATCH RULES

A. ALL DIVISIONS WILL BE GOVERNED BY FIFA RULES AND REGULATIONS. SMYSL SPECIFIC RULES AND/OR EMPHASIZED RULES ARE LISTED BELOW.

Goalkeeper:

- B.** In the judgment of the referee, intentionally charging the goalkeeper will result in a direct kick and ejection of the charging person(s).
- C.** The Goalie can play the ball anywhere on the field of play.
- D.** The Goalie cannot play the ball with their hands if the ball is intentionally played to them by their own player's feet.
- E.** Goalkeeper cannot score by throwing the ball into the opponents' goal.
- F.** Goalposts, crossbar, and nets must not be moving when a penalty is taken, and the goalkeeper must not be touching them
- G.** Goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot on, or in line with, the goal line when a penalty kick is taken; cannot stand behind the line
- H.** If an offence occurs after the referee signals for a penalty kick to be taken but the kick is not taken, it must then be taken after any yellow card or red card is issued

I. Player blood rule is in effect.

- If bleeding results from an injury, the player must be removed from the match until the bleeding has stopped and the open wound is bandaged.
- If there is excess blood on the player's jersey, it will have to be changed.

J. Head ball:

- Head balls are prohibited in the following age groups: U6, U8, U10, & U12.
- In leagues where heading the ball is prohibited, when a player touches the ball with his head, regardless of if it is deliberate, accidental, or inadvertent, play will stop immediately, and advantage will not be played.
- Restart will be determined by the referee.

K. Handball:

- Restart: If the touch is deliberate, Indirect Free Kick at the location of the offense. If accidental or inadvertent, dropped ball at the location of the touch. Restarts within the goal area are placed at the "6", which is the top of the goal area.
- Handballs are judgement calls made by the official. Judgement calls are not available for protest. Typically, a handball is not an offence if:
 - a. The hand/arm is close to the body
 - b. The hand/arm does not make the body unnaturally bigger
 - c. When a player falls and the hand/arm is between the body and the ground to support the body, but not extended from the body.

L. Slide Tackle

- Prohibited in U6- through U-12 Divisions.
- Penalty card will result for violation.
- Permitted for U-15 and U-19 Division.

M. Officiating

- Capital Area Soccer Referees Association will officiate all SMYSL matches. FIFA rules and guidelines will be used unless otherwise indicated.
- All verbal offences are penalized with an indirect free kick
- Defending team free kicks in their penalty area, the ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not have to leave the penalty area
- Once an indirect free kick has been taken, the referee can stop showing the indirect free kick signal if it is clear that a goal cannot be scored directly.
- When there is a defensive 'wall' of at least 3 players, all attacking team players must be at least 1 m from the 'wall'; indirect free kick is awarded if they encroach

N. Handball:

- It is an offence if:
 - i. if a player deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, including moving the hand/arm towards the ball.

- ii. Gains possession/control of the ball after it has touched their hand/arm
- iii. The hand/arm has made their body naturally bigger using their hand/arm

O. Injury

- Play will stop at the discretion of the referee.
- No spectator or coach is allowed in the field of play unless invited by the referee.
- If stoppage occurs with the ball still in play, play restarts with drop of ball.

P. U6 Division Specific Rules:

- 4V4 without a goalie
- NO offsides
- NO direct kicks
- Goal Kicks may be taken as far out as the penalty kick mark. The goal box will be extended out six (6) feet (by an imaginary line to include the penalty mark, for goal kicks only).
- All players on the opposing team must retreat to mid-field on a goal kick.
- Once the goal kick has been taken, players may then enter the field of play.
- Coaches should not be in the goal area at any time.

Q. U8 Division Specific Rules

- 5V5 with a goalie
- NO offsides
- **All kicks are indirect opponents should be back five (5) yards from the ball.**
- No kicks from inside the goal box. If a foul occurs within the goal box, the ball will be placed at the nearest point on the “6”, which is the top of the goal area.
- Throw-ins: Players are offered two (2) chances to throw the ball in correctly.
- Opposing team will get the ball after the second failed attempt.
- Goal Kicks will be taken from the 15-yard line/box - not the 5-yard line. Kicks taken by the defender.
- Goalkeeper should be in goal during the kick.
- When the goalkeeper has the ball in his or her hands during play from the opponent, the opposing team must move behind the mid-field line until the ball is put into play.
- Once the opposing team is behind the mid-field line, the goalkeeper can pass, throw, or roll the ball into play (punts and drop kicks are not allowed.)
- After the ball is put into play by the goalkeeper, the opposing team can cross the mid-field line and play resumes as normal

R. U10 Division Specific Rules:

- 7V7 with a goalie
- Offsides is called in the U10 Division, however not between the build out line.
- Build Out Line
 - a. Build out line should be equidistant between the penalty area line and halfway line.
 - b. When the goalkeeper has the ball in his or her hands during play from the opponent, the opposing team must move behind the build-out line until the ball is put into play.

- c. Once the opposing team is behind the build-out line, the goalkeeper can pass, throw or roll the ball into play (punts and drop kicks are not allowed.)
- d. After the ball is put into play by the goalkeeper, the opposing team can cross the build out line and play resumes as normal.
- e. The opposing team must also move behind the build out line during a goal kick until the ball is put into play.
- Yellow Card - Any player receiving a yellow-card will have to sit out of the match for a minimum of two (2) minutes. Players that receive a yellow card may be substituted.
- Red Card - Any player receiving a red card cannot be substituted. A player receiving a red card will be ejected from the match and cannot be he substituted. In addition, he or she will be suspended from that point and a tier one suspension will be issued. See Section VI. Ejections/Suspensions.
- Penalty kicks will be taken from the Penalty Mark on each field

S. U12 Division Specific Rules

- 9V9 with a goalie
- Offsides is called in the U12 Division.
- Yellow Card - Any player receiving a yellow-card will have to sit out of the match for a minimum of two (2) minutes. Players that receive a yellow card may be substituted.
- Red Card - Any player receiving a red card cannot be substituted. A player receiving a red card will be ejected from the match and cannot be he substituted. In addition, he or she will be suspended from that point and a tier one suspension will be issued. See Section VI. Ejections/Suspensions.
- Penalty kicks will be taken from the Penalty Mark on each field

T. U15 & U19 Division Specific Rules

- 11V11 with a goalie
- Offsides is called in the U15 & U19 Divisions.
- Yellow Card - Any player receiving a yellow-card will have to sit out of the match for a minimum of two (2) minutes. Players that receive a yellow card may be substituted.
- Red Card - Any player receiving a red card cannot be substituted. A player receiving a red card will be ejected from the match and cannot be he substituted. In addition, he or she will be suspended from that point and a tier one suspension will be issued. See Section VI. Ejections/Suspensions.
- Penalty kicks will be taken from the Penalty Mark on each field

IX. League Standings/Scores

A. League Standings: Points are kept. No standings will be recorded for the U6 and U-8 Divisions.

- Win = 3 points
- Tie = 1 point
- Loss = 0

B. For age groups, U10-U19, all scores must be reported

- Scores are to be reported to Tyler Roberts via the Google Sheets Form ([SMYSL Score Form - Google Forms](#))

- C. **Goal Differential:** If a match ends with a difference of more than 5 goals, the official box score will be a maximum of a 5-goal difference – for example if a score is reported 8-1 the final score will be registered as 6-1.
- D. **Tie-Break Procedures:** will only be used if teams are tied in regular season standings. Win/Loss record in head-to-head competition.
- Point differential in head-to-head competition.
 - Least points allowed by teams still tied.
 - If possible and necessary, a play-off will be held.
 - If teams are tied at the end of regular season and one of the teams has won one (1) or more matches by forfeit.
 - Match(s) which were won by forfeit will not be included in the head-to-head competition (tie break procedures).
 - The match in which each opponent played against team which forfeited, will be eliminated from the head-to-head competition.
 - Example: Team A and B have identical won/lost records at the conclusion of regular season. Team C has a forfeit to Team A but won or lost to Team B by playing a match and not forfeiting. Because of the forfeit of Team C to Team A, the match with Team C and B will also be recognized as a forfeit and both matches with Team C will not be included in the head-to-head competition (tie break procedures). This rule may be duplicated as often as necessary.

X. Playoffs

- A. A Post Season Tournament will be offered following the spring season (Time & Weather Permitting)

XI. Protests

- A. A \$50 deposit must also accompany the protest form. Protest fees must be paid in form of cash, club check, money order or certified check. No personal checks or credit cards will be accepted. All protest forms must be signed by both the Coach and the Organizations President.
- B. Judgement Call Protests: NO PROTEST WILL BE ACCEPTED ON JUDGEMENT CALLS BY MATCH OFFICIALS.
- C. Match Rule Protests
- Match rule protests must be received in writing on Protest Form in the Sports Office, within 2 business days after the match to which it refers was played.
 - For a match rule protest to be valid:
 - a) All protest must be on the Sports Office Protest Form and must be submitted and signed by the Organization's President.
 - b) If protest is valid, deposit will be returned.
- D. Eligibility Protests
- Eligibility protests may be made any time prior to the completion of the last scheduled match of the current regular season. However, protests regarding the last scheduled match must be:
 - a) Received in writing in the Sports office within two (2) business days after the match played.
 - b) All upheld Eligibility Protests will result in the forfeiture of all matches in which the protested player has participated.

XII. Postponements/Cancellations

- A. Schedule Changes:** THERE WILL BE NO SCHEDULE CHANGES OTHER THAN FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER OR CONFLICT IN FIELD SCHEDULING.
- Any match which is rescheduled and played without the authorization of the SMYSL League Director will result in a double forfeit. Both teams will receive "0" points for league standings.
- B.** Emails will be sent to organization presidents to provide updates on program or facility cancellations and closures due to inclement weather.
- C.** Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff will notify Organization Presidents of match cancellations as soon as possible. Presidents will inform coaches, who in turn will notify players. The SMYSL League Director will notify the officials' commissioner/assigner.
- D.** If weather conditions change while a match is in progress, or the field is in unsafe playing condition--the match official will make the decision to cancel matches at the match site.
- E.** Matches cancelled due to inclement weather will be rescheduled according to field availability and time.
- F.** Matches cancelled during the first half of play will be rescheduled in their entirety. Matches cancelled during halftime will be continued from that point (score remains same when match is rescheduled). Matches cancelled after the start of the second half will be counted as a complete match.
- G. Thunder and Lightning** - If thunder and/or lightning can be seen or heard, participants, spectators and staff are in danger. The contests must be stopped, and protective shelter sought immediately. If either situation should occur, 15 minutes will be allowed to pass after the last sound of thunder and/or lightning before the contest may resume.

XIII. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:

- A.** Emails will be sent to organization presidents to provide updates on program or facility cancellations and closures due to inclement weather.
- B.** Teams scheduled for the first match of the day will report to the playing site as scheduled, unless prior notification is received from their respective Organization President or Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff.
- C.** Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff will notify Organization Presidents of match cancellations as soon as possible. Presidents will inform coaches, who in turn will notify players. The SMYSL League Director will notify the officials' commissioner/assigner.
- D.** If weather conditions change while a match is in progress, or the field is in unsafe playing condition--the match official will make the decision to cancel matches at the match site.
- E.** Matches cancelled due to inclement weather will be rescheduled according to field availability and time.
- F.** Matches cancelled due to inclement weather will be rescheduled according to field availability and time.
- G.** Matches cancelled during the first half of play will be rescheduled in their entirety. Matches cancelled during halftime will be continued from that point (score remains same when match is rescheduled). Matches cancelled after the start of the second half will be counted as a complete match.
- H.** Thunder and Lightning - If thunder and/or lightning can be seen or heard, participants, spectators and staff are in danger. The contests must be stopped, and protective shelter sought immediately. In the event that either situation should occur, 15 minutes will be allowed to pass after the last sound of thunder and/or lightning (before the contest may resume).
- I. Safety Concerns - Heat Policy** - There is considerable danger concerning heat stress/exhaustion during outdoor physical activities which occur during late spring, summer, and early fall. All athletes are at risk and the necessary precautions need to be taken for all sports. All participants should be monitored closely.

- J.** Coaches shall pay particular attention to extreme weather conditions and make adjustments in their practice schedules when appropriate. When the heat index (air temperature plus relative humidity) reaches 84 degrees or higher, the following restrictions listed below must be followed:

HEAT INDEX READING	RESTRICTION
105+ degrees	DANGER! Discontinue regular practice. Very short restricted practice is permitted. Make sure all athletes drink water.
95 - 104 degrees	EXTREME CAUTION! Modify practice with required water breaks every 30 minutes. Observe athletes carefully for signs of heat injuries. Make sure all athletes drink water.
84 - 93 degrees	WARNING! Provide a mandatory ten (10) minute rest per 45 minutes of activity. Water is to be available at all times.
Below 83 degrees	NO RESTRICTIONS. Monitor the heat index for increases. Water is to be available at all times.

CONCUSSION FACT SHEET

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a “ding”, “getting your bell rung”, or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost, even if they do not directly hit their head.

The potential for concussions is the greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common.

Concussions can occur, however, in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity. As many as 3.8 million sports and recreation-related concussions occur in the United States each year.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a match or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of match, score, or opponent

- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Cannot recall events prior to hit or fall
- Cannot recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly
- Learn the signs and symptoms of concussion.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

- **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 sports
- **Keep your child out of play**
 - Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play 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. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- **Tell your child’s coach about any recent concussion** ○ Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

Remember, you can’t always see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury. It’s better to miss one match than the whole season.

For more detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/injury>