



Charles County Recreation, Parks, and Tourism

Southern Maryland Youth Soccer League (S.M.Y.S.L)

Guidelines

ALL UPDATES HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW

REVISED 8/7/2019

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 games at all times.
- C. **Administration:** All leagues will operate under the jurisdiction of the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. Questions and concerns should be brought to the League Director's attention for review.

II. PRESIDENTS AND COACHES:

- A. **Presidents will be the respective association representatives and will be responsible for the following:**
- Be the liaison between the League Director and their respective teams and board members.
 - Attend all presidents meetings.
 - Inform coaches and board members about all information pertaining to the league (rules, regulations, schedules, etc.).
 - Responsible for the conduct of coaches, team members, spectators and board members.
 - Reinforce the philosophy of the league to all participants and board members.
 - Obtain and return all pertinent information to the Director such as franchise fees, registration forms, rosters, etc.
 - **Participate in the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Coaches Certification program, including completion of a Criminal Background Investigation, and adhering to the N.Y.S.C.A. Code of Ethics.**
 - **Enforce, distribute, and collect the Parent's Code of Conduct/Ethics from every participant's respective family or guardian.**
 - Presidents are reminded that administering any type of drug to players is absolutely prohibited and is in violation of NYSCA Coaches Code of Ethics, SMYSL Advisory Board, and the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. Violators will be subject to expulsion from Recreation, Parks, and Tourism programs.
 - Adhere to the Charles County Public School no smoking policy while on school grounds. Including E-Cigarettes.

B. 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.).
- Ensuring all roster information, including assistant coaches' names and phone numbers, remain current throughout the season. Changes must be reported immediately to the organization's president.
- **Participate in the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Coaches Certification program, including completion of a Criminal Background Investigation, and adhering to the N.Y.S.C.A. Code of Ethics.**
 - NYSCA 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 NYSCA insurance purposes, a NYSCA certified coach 16-17 years of age must be coaching under the supervision of a certified coach 18 years or older. NYSCA certification is not available for coaches under the age of 16.
- **Parent's Code of Conduct/Ethics**
 - **Distribute and collect signatures from each player's parent/guardian and return to league president.**
 - **Enforce the Parent's Code of Conduct/Ethics at practice and games.**
- Coaches are reminded that administering any type of drug to players is absolutely prohibited and is in violation of NYSCA Coaches Code of Ethics, SMYSL Advisory Board, and the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. Violators will be subject to expulsion from Recreation, Parks, and Tourism programs.
- Adhere to the Charles County Public School no smoking policy while on school grounds. Including E-Cigarettes.
- **Coaches are required to play every player for at least half of each scheduled game.**
- **Any team official or coach guilty of misconduct can be shown a yellow card or red cards.**
 1. **If an offender cannot be identified, the senior coach in the technical area receives the yellow card or red card.**

III. TEAM MEMBERSHIP:**A. All players must be registered**

- **Players may only be rostered on one team.**
- Players must be between the ages of 4 and 18 years old.
 - (1) 18 year olds must be enrolled in high school. 18 year olds that have graduated from high school may not play in the Southern Maryland Youth Soccer League (S.M.Y.S.L)
 - (2) All players age 17 and younger may participate as long as they are not currently playing collegiate soccer.
- Rosters and registration forms are due by the designated date listed on the soccer calendar.
- Additions to rosters may be made by submitting a registration form to the League Director.

- Rosters are frozen at 4:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to the second weekend of scheduled games. Players are eligible to play once the signed registration forms have been received by the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism office.
- Written notice must be received from the Association President when a player has withdrawn from the respective association once the season has started.
- All teams will consist of a minimum and maximum roster size. See section IV Program Format
- Players must play within the appropriate age division: see section IV. Program Format. Players may be allowed to play up one age level, but cannot play down in age. This must be declared before the start of the team's second practice.

B. Players will be distributed evenly among teams according to age, sex, and experience.

C. Select Player Status

- Any player who is currently participating in a Rec Plus, Select or Travel program shall be considered select status.
- Select players must be distributed as evenly as possible among teams in each individual age division, per association.
- All teams may have up to two (2) select players on their roster.

D. Out of County Players

- Non-Residents of Charles County are welcome to participate, however, in the circumstances where a division has reached a full capacity of teams, rosters with Charles County citizens will be given priority.

IV. PROGRAM FORMAT:

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

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

B. Age divisions will play the following formats:

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

C. Post Season play will be Time & Weather Permitting

- Post season play will be held for U10-U19 divisions.
- Post season play will not be held for U6 and U8 divisions.

D. Minimum/Maximum roster size

U6	Min: 10	Max: 12
U8	Min: 10	Max: 13
U10	Min: 10	Max: 15
U12	Min: 12	Max: 15
U15-U19	Min: 13	Max: 20

V. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY:

- A. Any team which knowingly plays a non-rostered or illegal player will automatically forfeit that game that the illegal player(s) participated in. In addition:
- The coach will be suspended for the next two (2) scheduled games.
 - In the event it is determined that the illegal player is from another team within the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism SMYSL league, then the player will be suspended from their assigned team for the next two (2) scheduled games.
 - Any further violations of the player eligibility rule may result in the coach and/or player(s) being suspended for the remainder of the season.
 - 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 and consult Club/Organization President of any player discipline issues.
 - Organization President must be aware of any decrease of mandatory play prior to implementing.
 - Once approved by the Club President, the decrease of playing time must be discussed between opposing coaches prior to the start of the game.
 - All ages for divisions will be determined by the U.S. Youth Soccer Birth Year & Season Matrix.
- B. 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.
 - Non-residents of Charles County are welcome to participate, however, in circumstances where a division has reached a full capacity of teams, rosters with Charles County citizens will be given priority.

VI. 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 game 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.

- **U6** 120' Long x 90' Wide (Pee Wee Field)
- **U8** 150' Long x 90' Wide (Small Field)
- **U10, 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/coaches sidelines at each game 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.

- **U6:** 9' Radius Semi circle
- **U8:** 3 yards X 12 yards (9' x 36')
- **U10, U12:** 4½ yards X 9 yards (13.5' x 27').
- **U15, U19:** 6 yards X 20 yards (18' x 60').

F. Goal Sizes:

- **U6 Division:** 6' W x 4' H
- **U-8 Division:** 4.50' W x 9' H
- **U-10, U-12 Divisions:** 19' W x 7' H
- **U-15, U-19 Divisions:** 24' W x 8' H

G. Duration of Match:

- Games will be played in halves; except U6 & U-8, which will be played in quarters.
- Half-time will not exceed ten (10) minutes.
- Game 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 game 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 must be covered on all exterior surfaces with no less than ½ inch thick padding. Only casts below the elbow will be permitted. A release letter from a qualified physician must be presented to the League Director before approval to play will be granted.
- No protective gear of any kind can be worn unless approved by 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.
- The following equipment items are approved for use during the current season. Referee examination of player's equipment prior to the match is mandatory.
 - Ball Sizes:

i	U6-U8	#3 Ball
ii	U10-U12	#4 Ball
iii	U15-U19	#5 Ball
 - Uniforms
 - i Home teams must wear scrimmage vests if a color conflict exists.
 - ii The Goalie must wear a jersey with colors which distinguish him/her from the players of both teams and from the referee.
 - Footwear:
 - i Players must wear sneakers or shoes with molded cleats.
 - ii No street shoes of any type are permitted.

H. Mandatory Play & Substitution Rules:

- **Coaches are required to play every player for at least half of each scheduled game.**
- 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 goal keeper.
- 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 plays.
 - At half-time.

I. Goalkeeper:

- In the judgment of the referee, intentionally charging the goalkeeper will result in a direct kick and ejection of the charging person(s).
- Can play the ball anywhere on the field of play.
- Cannot play the ball with their hands if the ball is intentionally played to them by their own player's feet unless it is from a kick in.
- Goalkeeper cannot score by throwing the ball into the opponents' goal.
- Goalposts, crossbar and nets must not be moving when a penalty is taken, and the goalkeeper must not be touching them
- 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
- 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

J. Indirect Free Kicks:

- a. All verbal offences are penalized with an indirect free kick
- b. For 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
- c. 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
- d. 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 if they encroach

K. Handball:

- a. 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
- b. It is usually not an offence if:
 - i. If the hand/arm is close to the body
 - ii. The hand/arm does not make the body unnaturally bigger

- iii. 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. Officiating:

- a. **Referee's Whistle:** When a call is made, the referee should make a verbal call as well as a hand signal.
- b. Referee may delay issuing a yellow card/red card until the next stoppage if the non-offending team takes a quick free kick and creates a goal-scoring opportunity

M. Slide Tackle

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

N. 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.
- If bleeding results from an injury, the player will be removed from the game 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.

O. Heading U6 – U12 Age Groups

- No Heading
- When a player touches the ball with his head, regardless if it is deliberate, accidental or inadvertent, stop play immediately.
- Do not apply advantage.
- 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.

P. U6 Division Special Rules:

- No offsides
- NO direct kicks in the 5-6 age group.
- 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. **Five-A-Side Rules (U-8 Division):** All Five-A-Side games will be played using F.I.F.A. rules with the following modifications:

- **Fouls/Kicks:**
 - 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 there, the ball will be placed at the nearest point outside of the box.
 - Throw-ins: Players are offered two (2) chances to throw the ball in correctly.
 - Opposing team will get the ball after two (2) failed attempts.
 - 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. 10 yard stand back rule.
- All offensive players must retreat to midfield on goal kicks and cannot enter field of play until the goal kick occurs.

R. **Seven-A-Side Rules (U-10 Division):** All Seven-A-Side games will be played using F.I.F.A. rules with the following modifications:

- Field of Play: All games will be played on Intermediate-size soccer fields.
- Yellow Card - Any player receiving a yellow-card will have to sit out of the game for a minimum of two (2) minutes--these players can be substituted.
- Offsides- Is called in this division.
- Red Card - Any player receiving a red card cannot be substituted. A player receiving a red card will be ejected from the game, and cannot be he substituted. In addition, he or she will be suspended from that point, and the next game.
- Penalty kicks will be taken from the Penalty Mark on each field
- All Seven-A-Side games will only require two officials.

S. **Ejections and Suspensions:**

Consequences for suspensions/ejections will be decided by the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism office based upon a 3 Tier system. Anyone suspended may not attend any game sites until their suspension has been fulfilled. NYSCA Coaches Code of Ethics must be signed and adhered to by all coaches.

Tier One: 1 Game Suspension

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

- Is ejected from a game by an official for harassment, obscene gestures or language, or any other unsportsmanlike behavior. Receives a red card before, during or after the match. The result of these actions will result in a 1 game suspension effective immediately, starting with your teams next scheduled game.
- Any further ejections will result in suspension from the league.

Tier Two: Suspension for the remainder of the season

Players will be suspended from the league and all Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism programs for the remainder of the season.

- A Tier Two offense will be issued, at the discretion of the League Director, to any player, coach, or spectator who has:

- 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 game, on Charles County Community Center, Public School, or Park property.

Tier Three: 2 Year Suspension

- Anyone involved in a Tier Three offense will be suspended from the league and all Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism programs for a minimum of two years.
- A Tier Three offense may be issued, with discretion from the League Director, to any player, parent, coach, or spectator who:
 - Commits multiple Tier One and Tier Two offenses within a 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 game, on Charles County Community Center, Public School, or Park property.

S. League Standings: Points are kept as follows, and wins/losses. No standings will be recorded for the U6 and U-8 Divisions.

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

T. Scores Reporting

- U10-U19 - All scores must be reported
- All scores are required to be reported by each individual organization for all games by Tuesday of each week of the regular season.
- Each organization should designate one individual to report scores for the week.
- Scores are to be reported to Tyler Roberts via Email (robertmt@charlescountymd.com)

U. 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 games by forfeit.
- Game(s) which were won by forfeit will not be included in the head to head competition (tie break procedures).
- The game 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 game and not

forfeiting. Because of the forfeit of Team C to Team A, the game with Team C and B will also be recognized as a forfeit and both games 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.

VII. **Awards:** Any awards given by Associations or parents will not be endorsed by The Department of Recreation, Parks, & Tourism and may be given solely at the Association's discretion.

VIII. **Protests/Complaints:**

- Formal protests must be made in writing and submitted to Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism within two (2) business days of the incident.
- All protests must be accompanied by a \$25.00 check from the protesting organization. If the protest is valid and upheld by the League Director, the check will be returned to the organization.
- Rule interpretations must be protested at the time of the incident and before play resumes.
- The protesting coach must request that the referee notify the opposing coach that the game is being continued under protest.
- **Protests may not be made after a game has been completed.**
- Protests involving officials' judgment will not be considered. The only grounds for protests will be for misinterpretation of rules or player eligibility.
- The League Director will investigate and have final ruling on all protests.
- No verbal complaints concerning referees, players, other teams, etc., will be addressed--all complaints must be made in writing and submitted to the League Director.

IX. **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 League Director will result in a double forfeit. Both teams will receive "0" points for league standings.

X. **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:**

In case of inclement weather the following procedures will be used to notify teams of game cancellations:

- Charles County Recreation, Parks and Tourism has recently began using the mobile notification system “ **RainedOut**”. This is a free group communication system that allows sports organizations to notify participants about closures and cancellations.

Step 1: Go to www.rainedout.com

Step 2: Search Charles County Recreation, Parks & Tourism

Step 3: Enter your mobile phone number or email address to receive text alerts about closures and cancellations.

Step 4: Once you confirm your mobile phone number or email address, subscribe to any group you think is appropriate for your sports season.

- Teams scheduled for the first game of the day will report to the playing site as scheduled, unless prior notification is received from their respective Association President or Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff.
- Recreation, Parks, and Tourism staff will notify Association Presidents of game cancellations as soon as possible. Presidents will inform coaches, who in turn will notify players. The League Director will notify the officials' commissioner/assigner.
- If weather conditions change while a match is in progress or the field is in unsafe playing condition--the game official will make the decision to cancel games at the game site.
- Matches cancelled due to inclement weather will be rescheduled according to field availability and time.
- 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 game is rescheduled). Matches cancelled after the start of the second half will be counted as a complete game.
- 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).

XI. **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.

XII. 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 game 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 game, 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 game than the whole season.

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

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