



TO: Wilton Soccer Association Coaches, Parents & Players
FROM: WSA Board
DATE: September 2012
RE: **Concussions**

The Wilton Soccer Association takes the safety and health of our players seriously.

As the season kicks off we would like to focus your attention on one aspect of this: **concussions.**

The WSA is a member of the Connecticut Junior Soccer League (CJSL), which is affiliated with US Youth Soccer (USYS). As such, we follow all recommended concussion guidelines put forth by USYS. Below you will find a summary of those guidelines (with available resources).

Background

In 2011, US Youth Soccer and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) teamed up to help protect participants of youth soccer from the risks of concussions. The campaign is an expansion of the "**Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports**," and aims to help get concussion information into the hands of volunteer soccer coaches, parents, and players who are on the front-line to help identify and respond appropriately to concussions among young athletes.

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Concussions can have long-term impacts on young athletes, such as on their health, memory, and learning.

"Education is a core element to the goals of US Youth Soccer and furthering the awareness and steps to minimize potential serious injuries to our youth athletes is paramount," said John Sutter, president of US Youth Soccer. "Concussions are serious and materials that are now available will get the right information about how to identify and manage a concussion directly into the hands of the people that need it the most – our youth sports coaches, parents and the athletes themselves."

Guidelines & Resources

"**Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports,**" is designed to help coaches, parents, and fellow athletes recognize the symptoms of a concussion and provides actions that need to be taken when an athlete is showing signs of a concussion.

Resources:

Materials are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html> and include the following:

- An online training for parent coaches;
- A fact sheet for coaches;
- A fact sheet for athletes;
- A fact sheet for parents.

Summary of guidelines:

- Upon suspicion of concussion (symptoms as per CDC resources above), player should be immediately removed from play.
- Player should not be allowed to return to play until examined and approved by a physician.

WSA Policies/Practices:

The WSA follows the above guidelines as recommended in the "Heads Up: Concussions in Youth Sports" program.

- Our professional coaches are trained to manage this as part of their professional training.
- Our volunteer coaches and managers are briefed on these guidelines, and strongly encouraged to further review the resources above. They are also provided with on-the-field resources (reference materials are included with every gear bag and available on the field if/when necessary).
- The WSA encourages all parents and players to review the reference materials.
- The WSA has a "Return to Play" policy that requires immediate removal of a player from play if there is suspicion of a concussion, and requires a doctor's note before further play is allowed.
- The WSA has a tab on our web page where additional resources can be found.

We are all in this together and more we all know, the better the overall health and safety will be for our players.

For more information, please visit our web site (www.wiltonsoccer.info) and review the Health & Safety Tab.