

Nashville Youth Soccer Association Concussion Policy

(Adapted from the Tennessee State Soccer Association Concussion Policy – Policy 31)

(The following information and forms comply with the Tennessee sports concussion law.)

In compliance with Tennessee Code Annotated Section 68-55-503, the Nashville Youth Soccer Association (NYSA) has adopted guidelines and forms as developed by the Tennessee Department of Health to inform and educate coaches, young athletes, and their parents or guardians of the nature, risk and symptoms of concussion and head injury.

Every individual involved in youth athletics must become more proactive in identifying and treating athletes who show signs of concussion or head injury. In order to address this critical issue, it is therefore NYSA's policy that:

Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems, shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

Education is the key to identifying and treating youth athletes who show signs of a concussion during athletic participation. It is very important that every administrator, coach, parent, official, athlete and health-care professional know the symptoms and steps to take when dealing with student-athletes that display signs of a possible concussion. Concussion can be a serious health issue and should be treated as such.

NYSA adopts and will comply with the terms set forth below in compliance with Tennessee law.

1. Information concerning the nature, risk and symptoms of concussion and head injury should be reviewed by all administrators, coaches, youth athletes and their parent or guardian. The Tennessee Department of Health has concussion information available on its website at <http://health.state.tn.us/tbi/concussion.htm> . The information includes a copy of "Signs/Symptoms of Concussion." The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Concussion Checklist is available at www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/TBI_schools_checklist_508-a.pdf . Every individual involved in athletics at NYSA must review concussion information and sign a form that states this process has been completed as set forth below.
2. All NYSA directors, coaches, and assistant coaches, whether employed or volunteer, shall complete a concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program approved by the Tennessee Department of Health each season. The concussion recognition and head injury safety education training programs are available on the Tennessee Department of Health website at <http://health.state.tn.us/tbi/concussion.htm> . The National Federation of State High School Associations has developed a free 20-minute course online entitled "Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know" which may be accessed at www.nfhslearn.com and has been recommended by the Department of Health.

3. Prior to the season's initiation of practice or competition season the following persons must review and sign a concussion and head injury information sheet: all Board members, coaches, and officials. (See Concussion Information and Signature Form for Coaches). This form is to be signed each season.
4. Prior to the season's initiation of practice or competition, all youth athletes and the athlete's parent or guardian should review a concussion and head injury information sheet. A form confirming this review (See Concussion Information and Signature Form for Athletes and Parents/Legal Guardians) shall be signed and returned by the youth athlete, if the athlete is 18 years of age or older; or, by the athlete's parent or guardian, for athletes younger than 18 years of age. This form is to be signed each season.
5. All documentation of the completion of a concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program and signed concussion and head injury information sheets shall be maintained by the NYSA for a period of three years.
6. Any youth athlete who shows signs, symptoms and behavior consistent with a concussion shall immediately be removed from the activity or competition for evaluation by a licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician or a clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training and present a "Concussion Return to Play" clearance to NYSA. (See Tennessee Protocol for Response of Schools/ Community-Based Youth Athletic Organization Representatives). In determining whether a youth athlete suffered from a possible concussion, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's concussion signs and symptoms checklist shall be utilized. (See CDC Concussion Signs and Symptoms Checklist).
7. No youth athlete who has been removed from play due to suspected concussion shall return to practice or competition until the youth athlete is evaluated by a qualified health care provider and receives written clearance from the health care provider for a full or graduated return to play. The Concussion Return to Play Form has been approved by the Tennessee Department of Health and should be used in practices and games. (See Tennessee Concussion Return to Play Form.) The form was adapted from the Acute Concussion Evaluation plan on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website www.cdc.gov/injury . It contains specific instructions that shall be followed before an athlete can return to sports. The form is to be completed and signed by a licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician or a clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training before an athlete that has been removed from practice or a game may return to participate. A copy of the form must be kept on file by the NYSA Director of Compliance for a period of three years.