

SMOKY MOUNTAIN MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCCER LEAGUE
CONCUSSION POLICY

January 21, 2014

In 2013, the Tennessee General Assembly enacted Public Chapter 148. This act, effective January 1, 2014, requires that school and community organizations sponsoring youth athletic activities establish guidelines to inform and educate coaches, youth athletes, and other adults involved in youth athletics about 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 in the Smoky Mountain Middle School Soccer (SMSS) league, 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 or practice and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

Education is the key to identify 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 students-athletes that display signs of a possible concussion. Concussion can be a serious health issue and should be treated as such.

1. Information concerning the nature, risk and symptoms of concussion and head injury should be reviewed by all team administrators, coaches, youth athletes and their parents or guardian. The Tennessee Department of Health has concussion information available online at <http://health.state.tn.us/TBI/concussion.htm>.

The following information includes a copy of "Signs/Symptoms of Concussion." The required Centers for Disease Control and Prevention concussion checklist is available at http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/TBI_schools_checklist_508-a.pdf. Every individual involved in athletics at the sponsoring school or youth organization must review concussion information annually and sign a form that states this process has been completed.

2. The NFHS has developed a free 20-minute course online entitled "Concussion in Sports - What You Need to Know." The course may be accessed at <http://www.nfhslearn.com>. Managers, coaches, and assistant coaches, whether employed or volunteer, must complete this course annually. The manager, coach and assistant coach shall email confirmation (certificate) of the completed course "Concussion in Sports - What You Need to Know" to the league Commissioner and Registrar.

3. Prior to the annual initiation of practice or competition the following persons must review and sign a concussion and head injury information sheet: all coaches, assistant coaches, managers, any appointed licensed health care professional, AND the league commissioner. [The "CONCUSSION Coach signature form final 2013-10-22.pdf" information sheet can be downloaded by clicking here.](#)

4. Prior to the annual initiation of practice or competition, all youth athletes and the athlete's parent/guardian should review a concussion and head injury information sheet: A form confirming this review shall be signed and returned by the athlete's parent/guardian. [The "CONCUSSION parent athlete sign final 2013-10-22.pdf" information sheet can be downloaded by clicking here.](#)

5. The coach or manager shall collect all the above mentioned forms and return them to the league. The manager, coach and assistant coach shall email confirmation (certificate) of the completed course "Concussion in Sports - What You Need to Know" to the league Commissioner and Registrar. All signed forms referenced by this concussion policy, the Waiver of Liability and Medical Release, and the Code of Sportsmanship and Behavior shall be held and turned into the league Commissioner at the season ending tournament to be kept 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 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" (RTP) clearance to the coach and league SMMSS Commissioner.

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 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 TDH and should be used in practices and games. 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. [The "SMMSS Concussion Return to Play" form can be downloaded here.](#) A copy of all completed forms must be kept on file by the coach and SMMSS commissioner.

8. 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 SMMSS for a period of three years.

SMMSS PROTOCOL FOR RESPONSE IF PLAYERS EXHIBIT SIGNS, SYMPTOMS OR BEHAVIORS CONSISTENT WITH A CONCUSSION DURING PRACTICE OR COMPETITION

1. Coaches, assistant coaches, managers, and other persons in roles of authority shall remove any player that shows signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion from the activity or competition.

2. The players shall be examined by a health care professional. If the health care professional determines that the player has not sustained a concussion, the player may return to the activity or competition.

3. The head coach shall be responsible for ensuring the clearance from a health care professional.

4. If the team does not have access to a health care professional, or if the health care professional suspects that the athlete may have sustained a concussion, the only means for an athlete to return to practice or competition is an evaluation by a licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician or a clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training and present a signed "SMMSS Concussion Return to Play" (RTP) clearance. SMMSS must keep this form on file for a period of three years.

SMMSS PROTOCOL FOR REFEREES DURING CONTESTS

1. Determine prior to the start of the game whether there is access to a designated health care professional during the game.

2. Continue to monitor players for possible signs of injury as usual.

3. Remove any player that shows signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion per CDC Concussion Checklist. [The "Concussion Signs & Symptoms Checklist" can be downloaded here.](#)

4. Inform the head coach that the player is being removed for showing signs, symptoms or behavior consistent with a concussion.

5. The coach shall the player examined by a health care professional. If the health care professional determines that the player has not sustained a concussion, the head coach may so advise the referee during an appropriate stoppage of play and the athlete may re-enter competition pursuant to contest rules.

6. The head coach is in charge of getting clearance from the health care professional.

7. If the team does not have access to a health care professional, or if the health care professional suspects that the athlete may have sustained a concussion, the only means for an athlete to return to practice or competition is an evaluation by a licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician or a clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training and present a signed "Concussion Return to Play" (RTP) clearance.

8. If signs, symptoms and behaviors consistent with concussion are observed by the referee, and a health care professional is not available to evaluate the player, the "Concussion Return to Play" (RTP) form MUST be completed and signed by a licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician or a clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training and shown to the referee by the head coach prior to the player returning to participate in a contest the same day.

9. Referees have no role in the diagnosis of a concussion. Referees are required to remove players from the contest when signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion are observed and the above written protocol must be followed. Referees must document on the official game report any action taken regarding this protocol.

Health care professionals - certified athletic trainer, licensed nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, medical doctor or osteopathic physician

SMMSS Concussion Policy Documents & Forms	
Description	Document Name
SMMSS Concussion Policy	SMMSS Concussion Policy.pdf
SMMSS Coaches Information and Signature Form	CONC Coach signature form final 2013-10-22.pdf
SMMSS Parent Information and Signature Form	CONC parent athlete sign final 2013-10-22.pdf
SMMSS Concussion Return to Play Form	Concussion Return to Play.pdf
SMMSS Concussion Signs & Symptoms Checklist	Concussion Signs & Symptoms Checklist.pdf
Tennessee General Assembly Chapter 148	Tennessee General Assembly Chapter 148.pdf