

SOCCER ALLIANCE AZ HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION POLICY

Effective 2023-2024 Seasonal Year

Policy for 2023-2024 Seasonal Year: Informed consent must be signed annually by parents and youth athletes acknowledging the risk of head injury prior to practice or competition.

A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury must be removed from play—
“when in doubt, sit them out”

The referee will note on the game card that a player is being removed due to head injury. The referee will pull the player pass and advise the coach or team manager that the player pass has been pulled and will require a written release before being allowed to play in any further games.

A youth athlete who has been removed from play must receive written clearance from a licensed Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) prior to returning to play.

The Soccer Alliance AZ “Concussion Return to Play Form ([SAAZ-Resources](#)) must be completed and signed by a licensed Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathy (DO).

This form must be submitted to the Soccer Alliance office prior to returning to play.

TEAM/CLUB OFFICIAL:

Shall be familiar with Soccer Alliance AZ Head Injury/Concussion policy.

Shall immediately remove from participation/competition any athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury.

Shall not allow an athlete who has been removed from play because of a suspected concussion/brain injury to return to play until the athlete has received written clearance from a licensed Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) prior to returning to play. The Soccer Alliance AZ “Concussion Return to Play Form” ([SAAZ-Resources](#)) must be completed and signed by a licensed Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathy (DO). This form must be submitted to the SAAZ office prior to returning to play.

In coordination with the parent/guardian, complete an injury report form within 30 days of the injury. ([SAAZ-Resources](#))

REFEREES:

Shall be familiar with Soccer Alliance AZ Head Injury/Concussion policy.

Shall note on the game card that player suffered Head Injury and was taken out of the game.

Shall complete the online concussion submittal form.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

Shall annually review, sign and return this form to the Soccer Alliance club member in which their child plays. This policy can be found on [\(Concussion Waiver\)](#)

ATHLETES: Shall annually review, sign and return this form to the Soccer Alliance club member in which they play for, prior to initiating practice or competition. This policy can be found [\(Concussion Waiver\)](#)

Athletes shall notify a coach if they or a teammate exhibit signs or symptoms of a concussion or brain injury.

The following providers are authorized to clear the athlete to return to play.

Licensed Health Care Providers:

- Medical Doctors (MD)
- Doctor of Osteopathy (DO)

Head Injury/Concussion Signs and Symptoms:

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head.

Concussions can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally functions. Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications, including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly. In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of a concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to appear fully. If your child/player reports any symptoms of a concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of a concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Headaches
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Change in sleep patterns
- “Don’t feel right”
- Sadness
- Irritability
- Confusion (i.e. forgetting game plays)
- Repeating the same question/comment
- “Pressure in head”
- Neck pain
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Drowsiness
- Amnesia
- Fatigue or low energy
- Nervousness or anxiety
- More emotional
- Concentration or memory problems

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches may include:

- Appears dazed
- Confused about assignment
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events after hit
- Any change in typical behavior or personality
- Vacant facial expression
- Forgets plays
- Moves clumsily or displays incoordination
- Slurred speech
- Can't recall events prior to hit
- Seizures or convulsions
- Loses consciousness

HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

What can happen if my child/player keeps on playing with a head injury/concussion returns too soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of a concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury.

There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athlete will often under report symptoms of injuries, and concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to student-athlete safety.

If you think your child/player has suffered a head injury/concussion:

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after a potential head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours.

“a youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time” and

“...may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider”.

The Soccer Alliance AZ “Concussion Return to Play Form” ([SAAZ-Resources](#)) must be completed and signed by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of brain injuries. This form must be submitted by email to the Soccer Alliance AZ office: info@soccerallianceaz.com

Licensed Health Care Providers acceptable to make the determination:

1. Medical Doctors (MD)
2. Doctor of Osteopathy (DO)

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child/player may have a concussion.

Remember, it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For the most current information on concussions please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/index>.

Athlete Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Athlete Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Coach Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Coach Signature: _____ Date: _____