

## **ESHA Concussion Policy 2011 (October 2011)**

As new research on the dangers of concussions is uncovered, treatment on sports sidelines is changing—from the little leagues to the professional level.

Pop Warner, the nation's largest youth football organization, recently established a rule that any athlete who has sustained a head injury must obtain a note from a licensed medical professional who is trained in the evaluation and management of concussions before suiting up to play (for example, a neurologist or a pediatric sports medicine specialist). This is particularly critical at the youth level, since so many coaches are parent-volunteers who lack the skills needed to decipher whether a player can safely return to the field. What's more, young athletes may not be able to accurately communicate their symptoms as articulately as older players.

We will be mandating the same for all of our players. Effective immediately, if a player has suffered a diagnosed concussion, that player will NOT touch the ice without a doctor's note clearing him/her to play. That means games **and** practices. To ensure the safety of the child/young adult, we must adhere to this policy. If a coach allows a player to take the ice without a doctor's note clearing the player, the coach will automatically be dismissed for violation of the "Coach Code of Conduct," for the safety of all ESHA players. There will be NO EXCEPTIONS.

**Coaches:** Below is a URL for a website on concussions. This is a certification that every ESHA coach must take. It will take about 30 minutes. It is for the safety of our players that we know all the facts we can about concussions.

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/Training/HeadsUpConcussion.html>

A Certificate will be needed to show you have completed the training. This information will be kept by the ESHA board and your manager. You will need to fill out the certificate and send it to the President and ACE Coordinator. This must be done by December 31, 2011. This is plenty of time to complete this certificate and help the safety of our players and program.

Below are a few facts known about concussions in youth sports:

What is known is that concussions are happening far too often. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), three million concussions occur every year in the United States. Among people 15 to 24 years old, sports are second only to motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of TBI. Concussions represent an estimated 8.9 percent of all high school athletic injuries, according to a report from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

"These injuries are happening more frequently than we ever realized," and they're not always easy to detect, says Julian Bailes, M.D., director of the Brain Injury Research Institute and professor and chairman of the department of neurosurgery at West Virginia University School of Medicine in Morgantown. "It can be very difficult to discern how serious a hit is by just seeing or hearing what happened," Dr. Bailes says.