PARENT ZONE

HEADING IN YOUTH SOCCER

In December 2015, U. S. Soccer announced limitations on the use of headers in youth soccer as part of the resolution in a concussion lawsuit which was filed against U.S. Soccer, United States Youth Soccer Association, American Youth Soccer Organization, U.S. Club Soccer and the California Youth Soccer Association.

To help reduce concussions in youth soccer, a new initiative will be launched to focus on four areas that include prevention and education, according to a U.S. Soccer press release:

- Education and awareness about concussions.
- 'Return to play' protocols after a suspected concussion for youth players.
- Changes to substitution rules in the game so players can be evaluated for a concussion without fear of penalty.
- Banning heading the ball for children 10 and under and limiting its use in practice in the 11 to 13 age group.



It is important to note that while these rules will be mandated for the U.S. Soccer and the other defendants and their youth teams and academies in the coming months, for most local youth organizations where these organizations don't have jurisdiction, the new guidelines can only be recommendations.

The initiative will not only include information about head injuries, but also other important player safety topics such as heat-related illness and injury prevention.



WSC will continue to educate their staff on concussion protocols. All WSC staff must complete concussion training before being eligible to coach for the club. Staff must complete an online educational concussion test prior to becoming head coach of any team or coach of any session.

WSC has also edited and changed the clubs developmental curriculum to fall in line with the new heading guidelines so that all heading is taken out of u10 and below sessions, with limited heading involved in the u11 - u13 age groups.

WSC also leads coach education sessions for it's staff and will be educating staff further on coaching the heading technique and sessions that will promote this technique with the appropriate age groups.