



WELCOME TO THE AYFL

2023 marks the 23rd year of operation for the Ashburn Youth Football League and our 6th Ultimate Flag season. We thank you for choosing us to play ultimate flag football or cheer with this season! Over the past 22 years, AYFL has produced more than 165 college football players, 9 NFL players, 2 NFL coaches, and many more successful and disciplined students and adults. We hope that this success continues in the near and far future with the next generation of football players and cheerleaders.

Please refer to this manual throughout the season for protocols, information, and expectation for this season's events. If you have any questions or concerns with the information presented in this manual, please email communications@ayfl.org. Note: the AYFL reserves the right to expand upon, change, or correct all information within this packet throughout the season. If this happens, parents will be sent an updated version.

All in-person board meetings and equipment distribution/return will take place at the AYFL Equipment Shed: **44642 Guilford Dr., Suite 111, Ashburn, VA 20147.**

Please follow us on Facebook (@AshburnFootball), Instagram (@ashburn_youth_football_league), and Twitter (@AYFL) for the most up to date information and highlights from the season!

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OUTLINE OF 2023 ULTIMATE FLAG SEASON

Date	Event
March 1st, 2023	Registration Closes
March 3rd, 2023	Team announcements
March 4th, 2023	Equipment Distribution***
March 6-10th, 2023	First Week of Practices
March 26th, 2023	Week 1 Games
April 2-9th, 2023	Spring Break (No games/practices)
April 16th, 2023	Week 2 Games
April 23rd, 2023	Week 3 Games
April 30th, 2023	Week 4 Games
May 7th, 2023	Week 5 Games
May 14th, 2023	Week 6 Games
May 21st, 2023	Week 7 Games
May 27-29th, 2023	Memorial Day Weekend (No games/practices)
June 4th, 2023	Playoffs: Round 1*
June 11th, 2023	Championship Games**
June 13th, 2023, 5:30pm	Last Chance Equipment Return***

*Only teams that win these games will advance to the next round of the playoffs. Teams may be subject to playing double-headers on this date. More information will be given once the game schedule is finalized.

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***Equipment Pickup/Return is at 44642 Guilford Dr., Suite 111, Ashburn, VA 20147

LYFA PARTNERSHIP

The AYFL is in a partnership with other house leagues in Loudoun County known as the Loudoun Youth Football Association (est. 2016). This partnership allows for a competitive schedule of approximately 5-9 teams per age division. At the end of the season, each team is seeded into the playoffs and compete for the LYFA championship.

The leagues in the partnership include Central Loudoun Youth Football League from the Leesburg area (www.clyfl.org), Upper Loudoun Youth Football League from the Purcellville area (www.ulyfl.com), and Lower Loudoun Boys Football League from the Sterling area (llbfl.org).

Each league holds home games at fields in their area, meaning that games can be located anywhere in Leesburg, Ashburn, and Sterling. Previous game locations for Ultimate Flag have included:

- Bill Allen Memorial Field - Sterling, VA (home field for LLBFL)
- Stone Bridge High School - Ashburn, VA (home field for AYFL)
- Briar Woods High School - Ashburn, VA (home field for AYFL)
- Freedom Park - Leesburg, VA (home field for CLYFL)
- Tuscarora High School - Leesburg, VA (home field for CLYFL)

Items that are determined by/under the supervision of the LYFA partnership:

- Game schedule
- Game rules
- Referees
- COVID-19 policy* *[from the guidance of the VA Health Department]*

Items that are determined by/under the supervision of the AYFL:

- Home field rules
- Registration fees
- Weather policy for practices and **home** games
- Coach Assignments
- Players' and Coaches' Equipment
- Raffle

More information on LYFA and Ultimate Flag will be sent out as soon as decisions are finalized.

Note: ULYFL (Purcellville) will not be participating in Ultimate Flag football (as of 10/18/2022)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE AYFL

We are constantly looking for volunteers to help at all levels of operation, and you don't need to wait to the end or beginning of a season to start

Administration:

- All board members are unpaid volunteers who are helping with organizing and executing the seasons.
- **Parents that officially volunteer as an elected member of the AYFL board are reimbursed for their registration fees at the end of the season.**
- If you have other abilities or skills not included in the positions mentioned above that could be helpful in running the league, please email us! Positions can be added based on the volunteers' strengths.

Coaching:

- All coaches are volunteers who are dedicated to teaching football and cheer to the next generation.
- Head coaches are organized before the season starts, but all head coaches would be happy to take on assistant coaches.
- If you are interested in assisting your child's head coach, please email the board to gain the needed certifications and communicate with your child's coach.

Team Parents/Managers:

- Team parents are the coaches' most helpful tool. Team parents help organize tasks/activities outside of football games/practices.
- Team parents can oversee collecting physicals, planning team parties, organizing snacks and water at games, help players on the sideline (equipment malfunctions, getting water, etc.).
- Register as a team parent and talk to your coach about what you can help with. Being a team parent can waive the volunteer fee. If you've paid the volunteer fee, email registration@ayfl.org to have it reimbursed at the end of the season.

Trainers:

- In the spring season, it is EXTREMELY difficult to find trainers who are available to help with injured players and medical emergencies during the game.
- When available, we schedule an LCPS trainer to be on site for games, but sometimes LCPS cannot guarantee a trainer for us.
- If you are a nurse or a medical personnel and are interested in helping us ensure our games remain safe, please email secretary@ayfl.org.
- **Trainers will be paid for their time and reimbursed for their child's registration fees.**

GAME DAY EXPECTATIONS

Game schedules are determined by the LYFA board of directors. Each league may run game day differently, so rules may vary depending on the hosting league.

Rules that are consistent across leagues:

- Parents are expected to always remain in the stands or at the outside perimeter of the field. Parents/families are **never** allowed on the football field.
- Video equipment that may be distracting to players is not permitted (i.e., drones).
- **NO** pets or dogs allowed, unless owner provides proof that the animal is a service animal to the hosting board members upon arrival.
- Families are expected to clean up their trash before they leave the stadium. *The hosting league is not responsible for personal items that are left behind, lost or stolen.*
- If at a school, **NO** parking in bus lanes or roundabouts/drop off areas

Equipment that is allowed at the fields:

- Tents (so long as they are not on the running track)
- Extra water jugs
 - If water needs to be refilled, please locate a board member for access to a trainers' room to refill the water jug. If games are taking place at a recreational field, this may not be possible. **Please bring extra water.**
- Spray bottles
- Cold towels in coolers
- Portable space heaters
- Portable fans
- First aid kits (coaches will have a first aid kit provided to them in their coach's bag)
 - NOTE: These items (except for coach's first aid kit) are **not** provided by the league but can be organized by the parents of each team.

Volunteers allowed on the field

- Registered Coaches
- Team Parent if aiding the team with water/equipment
- Play Count Keeper
- **ONE** photographer/videographer per team
- Board Members

Admission fees at away games

- Some leagues have admission fees to watch the football game. AYFL is **not** one of those leagues.
 - Games at **CLYFL** home fields require spectators to pay **\$2** per spectator
 - Games at **LLBFL** home field require spectators to pay **\$3** to enter the stadium.

LEAGUE-WIDE PARENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT

The following code of conduct was agreed to upon registering with the AYFL.

Breaching the AYFL Parent Code of Conduct will be reviewed on a case-to-case basis by the AYFL Board of Directors and may result in dismissal from the league without a refund.

The AYFL Cheer Program requires additional code of conduct provisions. This code of conduct will be distributed by the Director of Cheer prior to the start of the season.

All football coaches have the right to communicate additional provisions for their team's parents code of conduct policy at any time during the season. Football and cheer coaches also reserve the right to enforce an attendance policy and behavioral expectations for their players and cheerleaders.

Parents shall:

- Return all equipment, including shoulder pads and helmets, at the end of the season.
 - Cheer parents are required to return all poms and uniforms at the end of the season. Failure to return cheer uniform/poms will result in a \$150 charge.
 - Failure to return helmet and shoulder pads will result in a \$300 charge.
- Not use abusive or profane language at any time.
- Not criticize players, cheerleaders, coaches, referees, or board officials in front of teammates, spectators, or on online platforms.
- Not criticize an opposing team's players, parents, cheerleaders, fans, or coaches by word of mouth, gesture, or on online platforms.
- Accept the decisions of game officials as being called to the best of their ability, fair and final.
- Not smoke, use tobacco, or consume alcohol on any fields during/before/after practices and games.
- Maintain the prescribed parent-to-team barrier during practices and games.

Unusual circumstances in question that may be seen as unprofessional, unsportsmanlike, unacceptable, inappropriate or harassment will be reviewed by the AYFL Board of Directors on a case-to-case basis.

The Ashburn Youth Football League reserves the right to adjust, expand, or clarify the above provisions at any time before/during/after a season.

COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

All football and cheerleading coaches have agreed to abide by the following Code of Conduct provisions. If any of these provisions are violated, the League shall have the authority and obligation to impose a penalty, including up to dismissal from coaching duties and the league. **Coaches shall:**

1. Complete HeadsUp Football concussion training [for football] as well as Child Safety training courses [both football and cheer] prior to the start of the season.
2. Not at any time lay a hand upon, push, shove, or be guilty of physical contact upon any official, participant, coach, board member or any spectator.
3. Not use abusive or profane language at any time.
4. Not verbally abuse any game officials, participants, coaches, spectators, or board members. Bait or be guilty of objectionable demonstration or dissent at any officials.
5. Not criticize players/ cheerleaders in front of teammates and spectators but reserve constructive criticism for a later time for all to benefit.
6. Not criticize an opposing team's players, cheerleaders, coaches, or fans by word of mouth or by gesture at any time before, during or after a game.
7. Accept the decisions of game officials as being called to the best of their ability, fair and final.
8. Together with League officials, be jointly responsible for the conduct of team fans, spectator, and parents.
9. Exhibit sportsmanlike conduct regarding scoring.
10. Not permit an ineligible player or cheerleader to participate in a game.
11. Promote sportsmanlike conduct from players, subordinates, and parents.
12. Always put a players / cheerleader's health and safety before all other issues and concerns.
13. Not recommend or distribute any prescribed or over the counter medication.
14. Not receive any payment, in cash or compensation, for services as an AYFL coach.
15. Under NO circumstance can a coach dismiss a player or cheerleader from a team. All dismissals must be brought to the AYFL board for a review and vote by elected board officials. This includes excluding a child's family from team group chats and email chains.
16. Not use tobacco, alcohol, or illegal narcotics in front of participants during practices or games or be present during practices or games under the influence of alcohol or illegal narcotics.
17. Not distribute or communicate confidential information concerning players, coaches, or parents inclusive of code of conduct and any issues or incidents under investigation or review.
18. Not use social media for AYFL communications except team scores and positive accolades.
19. Not post individual player facial pictures without parental consent.
20. Not share or distribute any AYFL League documents (Player Registration sheets or emails) without authorization of the board.
21. Ensure all players on their teams abide by the league rules reference to player participation. (Play count)



As a youth-serving organization, the Ashburn Youth Football League considers the safety and well being of the youth in our programs a top priority. We prohibit abuse and strive to proactively address reports of this type of conduct, even if it means that someone will be embarrassed or upset. We want to hear about problems or concerns, and we will strive to act on them in a fair way in accordance with our policies.

We will report suspected abuse to the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Policy and Procedures:

Ashburn Youth Football League has adopted the following Policy and Procedures in an effort to provide a safe environment for our coaches, athletes, and their families.

- The **Coach Recruitment and Training** process shall include the following:
 - Volunteer application: Every coach and volunteer interacting with the youth players and cheerleaders of the AYFL must submit their application by registering online at AYFL.org. By registering to coach, all coaches consent to being subject to a background check to disclose to prior claims or allegations of sexual abuse or other inappropriate conduct.
 - Screening: A designated representative(s) of the organization will interview and meet each prospective coach/volunteer.
 - Background Check: All current and potential coaches will be subject to a background check, including inquiries regarding any previous record of sexual abuse or unlawful activity. This background check will be updated at least every year for each coach.
- An **Abuse Prevention Orientation and Training** shall be conducted annually.
 - For the 2023 seasons, every head and assistant coach will be required to complete the Child Safety Training through *Protect Youth Sports*.
 - All coaches will be distributed handouts related to the signs of abuse and preventive measures required of our coaches including mandatory reporting.
 - All coaches, parents and volunteers will be provided with resources and video modules for review at the beginning of the season, created and provided by *Kid Power*.
- **Prohibited Behavior**
 - Use of degrading language or behavior. Coaches are also responsible for stopping disrespectful behavior between team members, including sexual harassment.
 - Threatening or intentionally inflicting physical injury upon anyone, especially a minor. Coaches are also responsible for stopping threatening behavior by players.
 - Committing any sexual offense against a minor, or engaging in any sexual contact with a minor.

- Making any sexual advance, or engaging in other verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature with a minor--including behaviors related to grooming.
- Non-related one-adult/one-child interaction except in an emergency where following this policy would be dangerous to the child. In an emergency situation, the coach or volunteer must contact a representative of the organization to inform him or her of this contact and the reason for it. If a child is receiving individual instruction or working with a private coach, this activity must be in a public setting rather than behind closed doors.

• **Reporting of Suspected Child Sexual Abuse**

- A member of the Board of Directors or other official representative will be designated to receive reports of sexual abuse or other inappropriate conduct. This representative will promptly notify the proper law enforcement agencies.
- All coaches, volunteers, parents and program participants are directed to report any incident of abuse or suspected abuse that they witness or that is reported to them to the designated representative of the Board of Directors. Note: This does not preclude individuals from reporting abuse or suspected abuse to the proper law enforcement authorities.
- The designated representative will keep other Board members fully informed.
- Should a suspected incidence of abuse be reported, the coach/volunteer in question may be temporarily suspended from duties while an investigation takes place.
- The Board of Directors, when appropriate, shall communicate reports of child sexual abuse to the league members. The confidentiality of any who makes such a report will be protected.

Thank you to Malachite Strategies, Green Bay Packers and SportsSignup Online Sports Management Solutions for support of this project.

These policies have been adjusted to fit the values and requirements of the Ashburn Youth Football League. We thank you KidPower for their resources to aid in protecting youth players and bettering the youth sports community.



Protecting Youth Athletes from Sexual Abuse Key Actions for Parents and Coaches

Child predators tend to avoid children who have vocal adults looking out for them. This document and accompanying video, at www.kidpower.org/youth-sports/, provide practical ways to protect your children from sexual abuse.

You can't identify child predators by how they look. The key is to pay attention to behavior.

Common warning signs of sexual abuse by coaches:

- Giving individual players special gifts
- Spending extra time (by phone/email/text/in person) with individuals outside of official practices/games
- Telling players to keep secrets such as not sharing their conversations or activities with their parents

What can you do as a parent?

- Ask your organization's leadership for its policy on protecting athletes from abuse. If it doesn't have one, share this information sheet with them and tell them about the Youth Sports Child Abuse Prevention policy at <http://www.kidpower.org/youth-sports/child-abuse-prevention/>.
- A major key to child protection is "No secrets." Tell your children that any problems, favors, gifts, or touch should never be a secret.
- Give your children language to use if someone is making them feel uncomfortable. Teach them to say, "Please stop! This makes me feel uncomfortable."
- Encourage kids to tell you any time someone's behavior makes them feel unsafe. Even if you feel concerned about what a child has told you, act calm and ask open-ended questions like, "Tell me more about this."
- Tell your children you want them to tell you any time they have a safety problem even if it's uncomfortable to talk about, even if someone might get upset. Assure them you will do everything you can to keep them safe.
- If your child is receiving individual instruction or working with a private coach, make sure you can drop in any time, that your child knows personal safety skills, and that activities happen in public settings.
- If something makes you uncomfortable, address the coach calmly and respectfully. If you don't get a satisfactory response, take your concerns to organizational leadership, or perhaps the police if appropriate.
- Listen to your gut feelings. If anything seems wrong, even if you can't prove anything, have the courage to ask questions and to be persistent until you are satisfied. Potential abusers look for youth who do not have strong advocates, so your speaking up can help protect your child!

What can you do as a coach?

- Recognize that you are part of a network of people committed to protecting kids in youth sports!
- Give this sheet to all your parents. Tell them that you want them to approach you immediately if they are ever concerned about anything during the season.
- Avoid being alone with an athlete, except in the case of an emergency.

Other Resources

- Learn more about child protection and teaching kids personal safety skills from [Kidpower \(www.kidpower.org\)](http://www.kidpower.org).
- Learn more about how youth sports can increase kids' emotional safety from [PCA \(www.positivecoach.org\)](http://www.positivecoach.org).
- To make an official report or for information, contact a children's advocacy center such as The National Children's Alliance at www.nca-online.org or call 1-800-239-9950.
- For coach and volunteer background checks, visit www.KidSafePlus.com

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TEMPERATURE POLICY

Heat Index (or "Feels Like" Temp)	Provisions
100° and above	Game/practice canceled
95° to 100°	No helmets and shoulder pads, increased water breaks
90° to 94°	Increased water breaks, ability to remove equipment
36° to 89°	Play as normal
11° to 35°	Extended warmups. Players must wear long sleeves and pants. Reduce practice length.
10° and below	Games/practice cancelled

The AYFL follows the LCPS weather guidelines. The Board will send a league-wide email if practices must be cancelled due to heat or cold. **Is your LCPR field closed for today? Find out here:** <https://rainoutline.com/search/dnis/7034540011/>

LIGHTNING POLICY

1. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location. **Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.**
2. 30-minute Once play has been suspended, wait *at least* 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
3. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count will **reset the clock** and another 30-minute count should begin.

AIR QUALITY INDEX POLICY

The **Air Quality Index** is a measurement of air quality that is calculated from ozone and fine particle pollution measurements over the past few hours. A higher AQI indicates a higher level of air pollution, and consequently, a greater potential for health problems.

Level	Color	Description
**	White	Air quality information is unavailable.
0-50	Green	Good air quality. Little or no health risk.
51-100	Yellow	Moderate air quality. People who are unusually sensitive to air pollution may be mildly affected. Proceed with caution.
101-150	Orange	Unhealthy for sensitive groups. These groups may experience health problems due to air pollution. Warn families of the potential risks.
151-200	Red	Unhealthy. The general public may experience mild health effects. Sensitive groups may have more serious health problems. Warn families of the potential risks.
201-300	Purple	Very unhealthy. Everyone is susceptible to more serious health problems. Cancel games or practices.

HYDRATION

It can make or break performance. Keep your athletes from getting dehydrated, here is what they need to know.

WHAT GOES OUT MUST COME BACK IN

Depending on intensity, athletes can lose between 1 and 4 pounds of water per hour when working out.



Drink 12 fluid ounces of water 30 minutes before working out



Drink water throughout the day to keep hydrated prior to practices or games



Drink water every 20 minutes during the first hour after working out



Replenish electrolytes

THE PERFORMANCE KILLER

Dehydration symptoms to watch out for:

Headache	Dry mouth and thirst	Decreased output of urine	Dry skin	Lightheadedness, dizziness, sleepiness	Exhaustion	Disorientation and lack of focus	Fever	Hyperventilation	Diarrhea, vomiting	Loss of consciousness
MILD					SEVERE					

WHAT AND WHEN TO HYDRATE

- ✓ **BEFORE** - Cold water
- ✓ **DURING** - Electrolyte-packed sports drink or water
- ✓ **AFTER** - Chocolate milk or protein shake

DID YOU KNOW?

Painful muscle cramps can be prevented by staying hydrated.



5 HACKS TO PERFORM BETTER IN HEAT

Don't let the heat affect the intensity of your athlete's performance, or worse, lead to something more serious such as heat stroke.



WHAT TO TELL YOUR PLAYERS:



REALIZE WHEN IT'S TIME TO BREAK

If you feel dizzy, weak or exhausted, take 20 and slowly build your intensity back up.

★ PRO TIP:

Want to cool down quickly? Rest in the shade and try placing a cold towel on your head.



WATCH OUT FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR TEAMMATES

HEAT SYNCOPE:

Getting lightheaded or fainting during exercise

HEAT EXHAUSTION:

Inability to continue exercise because of weakness or fatigue

EXTERNAL HEAT STROKE (EHS):

Central nervous system dysfunction and body temperature of more than 104 degrees



IT'S IN WHAT YOU WEAR

Stay cool by wearing loose fitting, light colored clothing and minimize the amount of equipment worn during a workout.

★ PRO TIP:

Get outside conditioning earlier (before 10 a.m.) or later in the day (after 5 p.m.).



SPORTS DRINK VS. H2O

Drink water *before* your workout and sports drink *during* intense exercise.

★ PRO TIP:

When conditioning outside, keep drinks in a cooler so they can be nice and cold for when you need them.



TRAIN EARLY IN THE SEASON

Acclimating to hot temperatures is important if you want to make sure your performance is all-star ready.

★ PRO TIP:

Get out of the air conditioning and into the heat. Slowly build the intensity of your workouts as the summer progresses to get you in prime condition for the start of the season.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND TREAT THE VARIOUS EXERTIONAL HEAT ILLNESSES

	HEAT SYNCOPE	HEAT CRAMPS	HEAT EXHAUSTION
RECOGNITION	Refers to a fainting or lightheadedness episode	Painful, localized muscle cramps and may feel like they are “wandering” throughout the cramping muscle Usually visible and the muscle will feel hard	The inability to continue exercise in the heat from either weakness or exhaustion May feel hot, tired, sweating a lot, weak, dizzy and don’t feel able to continue exercise
CAUSES	Lack of heat acclimatization and poor fitness Blood pools in the lower extremities, reducing the heart’s ability to provide enough circulation	Combination of fatigue, dehydration and electrolyte losses through sweat Lack of heat acclimatization and poor fitness	Caused by either excessive fluid losses or electrolyte losses Dehydration causes less blood to be available for the working muscles and the skin to give off heat
TREATMENT	Lay the athlete on the ground and raise the legs about 12 inches This helps blood go back to the heart to normalize blood pressure	Rehydration with water and sport drinks Some light stretching or massage with ice on the cramping muscle	Remove the athlete from activity and put him or her in a shaded/ cool area Lay the athlete on the ground and raise the legs about 12 inches Replenish lost fluids Moderate cooling methods, such as ice towels, misting fans or cold water immersion
PREVENTION	Heat acclimatization	Arrive to practice well-hydrated and having consumed some salt with the last meal Minimize fluid losses during exercise and replace lost fluids post exercise Heat acclimatization	Heat acclimatization Arriving to practice/competition well-hydrated Minimizing fluid losses during activity and replace fluid losses after exercise
RETURN TO PLAY	The athlete should feel better within a few minutes, and full recovery is usually quick (within hours) Return to activity once the athlete feels better and is adequately hydrated	Once cramps resolve Without replacing lost fluids, risk of additional cramps is high	Should not return to activity on the same day Complete recovery usually takes 24-48 hours and must focus on rehydration and rest

IMPORTANT

If athletes need to go to the hospital, have them cool off first and transport them second. Rapid cooling onsite while waiting for transport to the hospital is a key to survival of an exertional heat stroke without medical staff.

EXERTIONAL HEAT STROKE (EHS)

What is exertional heat stroke (EHS)?

Exertional heat stroke occurs when the body reaches temperatures above 104°F and there is obvious central nervous system (CNS) dysfunction. CNS dysfunction can include any of the following: dizziness, collapse, confusion, irrational behavior, hysteria, aggressiveness, combativeness, disorientation, seizures and coma. It is a medical emergency.

What is the cause of EHS?

When the body is unable to give off heat fast enough, heat is stored and core body temperature continues to rise.

How do I treat someone suspected of EHS?

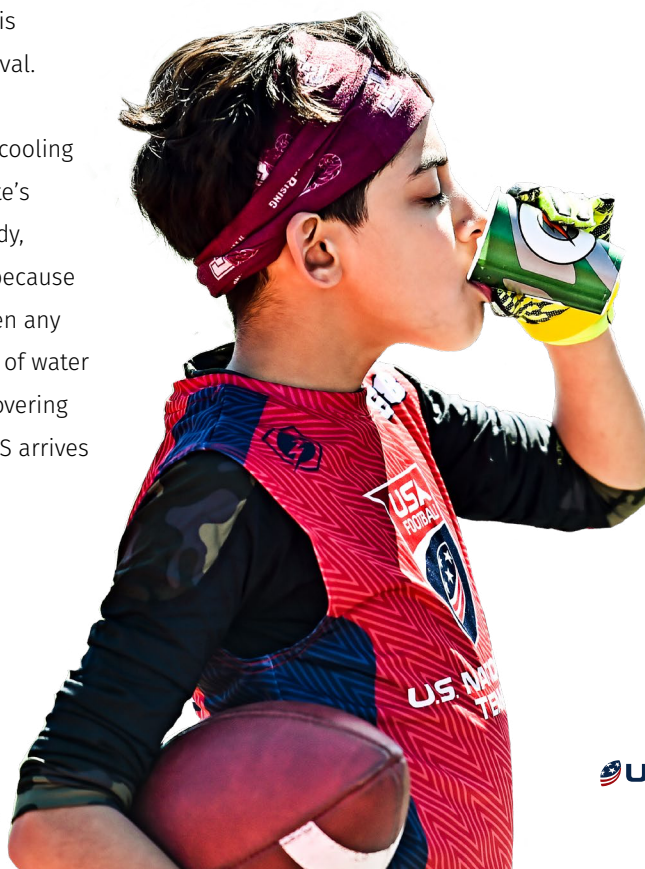
If EHS is suspected in an athlete, immediate action is imperative in order to maximize the chance of survival.

EMS (9-1-1) should be called immediately. Aggressive cooling of the entire body should be done to lower the athlete's core body temperature as fast as possible. Whole-body, cold-water immersion is the best treatment for EHS because it cools the body the fastest. If this is unavailable, then any attempts to cool the body through continual dousing of water (shower, running a hose over the entire body while covering the body with iced towels) should be done before EMS arrives to take the athlete to the hospital.

How do I prevent EHS?

There are multiple ways in which you can help prevent the occurrence of EHS:

- Having your athletes undergo a period of heat acclimatization
- Encouraging athletes to come to practice hydrated
- Allowing athletes unlimited access to hydration during activity
- Modifying practice when environmental conditions become extreme (allowing additional rest/hydration breaks, reducing the intensity of practice, reducing the time of practice and reducing the equipment worn during practice)
- Practicing at an intensity that is appropriate for the fitness level
- Encourage your athletes to speak up when they do not feel well - create a culture where this is considered smart





A Fact Sheet for **PARENTS**

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

- 1. Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.
- 2. Keep your child out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play until a health care professional says it’s OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- 3. Tell your child’s coach about any recent concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.

If you think your athlete has sustained a concussion:

- Take him/her out of play
- Contact your physician

CALL 202-476-2429



www.childrensnational.org/score

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACH/PARENT

Appears dazed or stunned
Is confused about assignments or position
Forgets sports plays
Is unsure of game, score or opponent
Moves clumsily
Answers questions slowly
Loses consciousness (even briefly)
Shows behavior or personality changes
Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
Can't recall events after hit or fall

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

Headache or "pressure" in head
Nausea or vomiting
Balances problems or dizziness
Double or blurry vision
Sensitivity to light
Sensitivity to noise
Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Concentration or memory problems
Does not "feel right"



202-476-2429



Suspect a Concussion?

Let the Concussion Recognition & Response™ App help you decide how to proceed . . .

Assess whether an individual is exhibiting/reporting signs and symptoms of a suspected concussion with the Concussion Recognition & Response app. In less than 5 minutes, coaches and parents can go through a checklist of possible signs/symptoms to determine whether to remove the child from play and the need for further medical examination. The app also provides home symptom monitoring for post-injury follow up.

Developed by concussion experts Gerard A. Gioia, PhD, and Jason Mihalik, PhD, the app is based on information from the CDC's "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports" program. Guiding the user through a list of possible symptoms, the app helps coaches and parents make informed decisions about next steps following a suspected concussion.

Concussion Recognition and Response. Guided questions help determine the likelihood of a suspected concussion based on observations by the parent or coach and/or symptoms reported by the athlete. A GPS records where the incident took place; a camera enables you to photograph the injured party; email allows you to forward accurate information and documentation to a health care provider.

Home Symptom Monitoring (HSM). After follow-up with health care providers, the app enables a parent or caregiver to record a child's symptoms through periodic evaluations, which are tracked during the hours, days, or weeks following an injury. This information can be emailed to the health care professionals, providing an update on the athlete's recovery.

Return-to-Play Guide. Based on information provided by the CDC, the Return-to-Play Guide helps to protect children and athletes from further injury by guiding them through a daily exercise routine that assists in their ability to return to play. Through a five-step, tiered workout routine and in collaboration with the child's health care provider, parents and coaches can ensure that the child is able to handle added exercise without further injury or discomfort.

ACE Post-Concussion Home/School Instructions. The app's concussion information section provides general information about concussions along with targeted answers to Frequently Asked Questions for parents and coaches.

Customized themes. Through an in-app purchase, you can customize the look-and-feel of the app with sport-related themes. Currently available for purchase are hockey, football, and lacrosse—with more coming soon!

For your iPhone®, iPad®, iPod® Touch, Android device or tablet!

Must have iOS version 4.0 or higher on your iPod® Touch, iPhone®, iPad® or Android version 2.1 or higher for your mobile device or tablet.

Available soon at the Apple® App StoreSM or Android Marketplace!

See screenshots →



Gerard A. Gioia, Ph.D., Director of SCORE Program
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Concussion Resources for Coaches & Parents

The following resources are aimed at helping and educating coaches and parents of youth and high school level athletes about concussions. Other useful and informative resources can be found on the **SCORE website**: <http://childrensnational.org/score/>.

CDC Concussion Resources: <http://cdc.gov/concussion/>

Heads Up: Youth Sports: <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>

Heads Up: High School Sports: http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/high_school.html

Video Resources:

Name:	Organization	Sports Orientation	Video Length	Link:
Heads Up Online Training Course	CDC	Youth Sports- includes variety of sports	~40 min (total with tests)	http://cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html
Concussion Awareness	USA Football, CDC	Football	12 min	http://videos.usafootball.com/video/Concussion-Safety
Concussions in Football: Signs, Symptoms and Playing Safe	NAN, NATA, NFL	Football	12 min	http://www.nanonline.org/NAN/Home/Home/FootballVid eo.aspx
Concussions in Hockey: Signs, Symptoms and Playing Safe	NAN, NATA, NHL, NHLPA	Hockey	12 min	http://www.nanonline.org/NAN/Home/Home/HockeyVid eo.aspx
Concussions in Lacrosse: Signs, Symptoms and Playing Safe	NAN, NATA, US Lacrosse	Lacrosse	12 min	http://www.uslacrosse.org/UtilityNav/AboutTheSport/Hea lthSafety/ConcussionAwareness/Video.aspx
Active: Athletic Concussion Training for Coaches	Oregon Center for Applied Science	Youth: Multiple sports	20 min	http://activecoach.orecasinc.com/
Youth Sports- Head Injury Guidelines and Procedures	WIAA, Harborview Medical Center, UW Medicine, Seattle Children's, BIAWA	Youth: Multiple sports	14 min	http://www.mywviaa.org/lystedt/default.htm
Concussion in Sports- What you Need to Know	NFHS, CDC	High School; multiple sports	~25 min	http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000
Play Smart; Understanding Sports Concussion	Brain Injury Assoc- Massachusetts	Multiple sports	2 separate videos (Students and Adults): 12 min each	http://www.briama.org/playsmart.html

If you think your athlete has sustained a concussion...don't assess it yourself.

Take him/her out of play, and seek the advice of a health care professional.

WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!

CONTACT INFORMATION

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**2023 Board of Director Elections are taking place on December 13th, 2022. The contact information above is subject to change based on the results of these elections.