

USASA CONCUSSION POLICY

The goal of the USASA Concussion Policy is to provide guidance for our Members when there is a suspected concussion in an adult player.

Sport related concussion is a traumatic brain injury induced by biomechanical forces. Several common features that may be utilized in defining the nature of a concussive head injury include:

- may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an impulsive force transmitted to the head.
- typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurological function that resolves spontaneously. However, in some cases, signs and symptoms evolve over a number of minutes to hours.
- may result in neuropathological changes, but the acute clinical signs and symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than a structural injury.
- results in a range of clinical signs and symptoms that may or may not involve loss of consciousness.

Early Signs & Symptoms of Concussion: Cognitive features: Unaware of game specifics (opposition colors, score of game, last play); confusion; feeling “dinged”, “having my bell rung”, dazed or stunned; memory disturbance, decreased information processing speed; amnesia (does not recall events prior to the hit or after the hit); alteration in consciousness; not oriented to time, place, or date. Physical symptoms: Headache, dizziness, nausea, unsteadiness/loss of balance, sensitivity to light/noise, and other visual changes such as seeing spots and blurred vision. Sleep disturbance: fatigue Mood disturbance: psychological disturbance (e.g. depression/anxiety/irritability/emotional stability).

Unlike other injuries, there may be consequences to “play through” a concussion. Practicing or playing while still experiencing symptoms may prolong the time it takes to recover and return to playing soccer. Repetitive brain injury, when not managed promptly and properly, may lead to long term injury. Your brain is one of the most vital organs in your body. Note: Symptoms may worsen with physical or mental exertion (e.g. computer and cell phone use, loud music or tv.). Concussions “ARE” treatable — they should be managed under the supervision of your physician.

It is recommended that the player be directed to seek a medical evaluation and clearance to play by their physician prior to being released to continue playing.