

# MCLEAN YOUTH SOCCER

**POLICY NUMBER: 107**

**POLICY TOPIC: CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**APPROVED: April 20, 2020; REVISED: September 16, 2024**

**PURPOSE:** To provide the operating procedure for managing and monitoring concussion injuries.

The Concussion Management Policy (the “**CMP**”) of McLean Youth Soccer (“**MYS**”) implements a standard operating procedure for managing and monitoring concussion injuries of MYS players. A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury that occurs when a blow or force to the head or body is followed by a change in behavior or performance.

The CMP was developed in 2020 in collaboration with Drs. Gerard Gioia, Christopher Vaughan, and Catherine McGill, all of the SCORE program (Safe Concussion Outcome, Recovery and Education) at Children’s National Hospital and revised by Dr. Catherine McGill in 2024.

The CMP was effective as of the adoption date and beginning in the Fall season of the 2014/2015 MYS year.

The CMP was developed with the following factors in mind:

1) A reduction of risk for MYS players.

Concussions are a real medical risk in youth soccer and an unfortunate element of the game. Increased education will help to ensure that when concussions occur in an MYS game or practice setting, they will be managed in a standard process and in a manner that can reduce the risk of a more serious injury. At the same time, there is a great deal of misinformation regarding head injuries and concussions. Without proper education and policy, the short and long-term risks associated with concussions increase.

2) Increased public awareness of concussions in youth soccer and youth sports.

By educating our coaches, staff and membership more generally about

concussions MYS aims to both reduce the risks to our players and to increase public awareness and sensitivity to the symptoms and proper management of concussion injury.

3) Proper concussion management is the law.

Virginia law, approved on April 7, 2014 by the General Assembly of Virginia (2014 HB 410/SB172), requires the education of coaches, parents, and athletes; removal from play of any athlete suspected of having sustained a concussion; and requires written authorization from an appropriate licensed health care provider before the athlete can return to play.

The goals of the CMP are to:

1) Protect our players. 2) Educate our coaches and staff. 3) Educate our parents and identify resources parents can use to educate themselves and their children/players on concussion identification, treatment and prevention. 4) Develop a policy and protocol that is consistent with the law in the State of Virginia.

The CMP has five parts: Education, Head Impact Protocol, Verification, Return to Play, and Baseline Testing.

### **Part 1 – Education**

- MYS will hold a coaches educational seminar (in one or several sessions) each year on injury recognition and return to play protocol with a target date for the seminar at the start of the Fall season.
  
- It will be mandatory for all travel coaches, age group directors and technical staff to attend the seminar. Any exceptions to attendance shall be approved by the MYS Executive Director.
  
- All travel coaches and travel team managers will download the free SCORE4BrainHealth phone application for on site evaluation of head impacts and will familiarize themselves with the Centers for Disease Controls & Prevention (**CDC**) educational materials, in particular the **CDC Concussion Symptoms Checklist** (see Appendix).
  - o <https://score4brainhealth.org/>
  - o <https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/index.html>
  
- A travel coach and/or the travel team manager on each MYS team will review the MYS

concussion policy at a parent meeting and provide team parents with the links referenced above.

- MYS will also make available information on concussion awareness and the SCORE4BrainHealth app to all recreational coaches.

## **Part 2 – Head Impact Protocol**

- In the event an MYS player sustains a suspected head impact or concerning injury that results in a change in behavior or performance, she or he will be removed from the activity immediately. This includes but is not exclusively limited to games, practices, skill sessions, other on-field activity, and off-field activities.
- The player will not be allowed to re-join the activity until after a travel coach/travel manager uses the SCORE4BrainHealth app evaluation or CDC Concussion Symptoms checklist to evaluate the player. Only if the child does not exhibit any new or unusual symptoms as per the CDC or SCORE4BrainHealth app checklists will the player allowed to return to the activity.
- If a player is not able to return to the activity as per above, that player shall not be allowed to return to an MYS activity until after he or she is reviewed and cleared by a licensed health care provider, per Virginia State law and documentation provided to the MYS travel coach and/or travel team manager.
- If emergency medical care is needed, such as when "red flag" signs or symptoms are observed or reported, the coach/manager shall call 911 and have the player taken to the ER, along with the parental permission form obtained from each family before the start of the season.
- In any situation, a parent may elect to remove his or her child from the activity if the parent is concerned about a head injury or potential head injury.

## **Part 3 – Verification**

- Any MYS travel coach – and specifically the designated head coach of the team – supervising a game or team activity is responsible for observing head injuries and being sensitive to activities that have the potential for head injury, (e.g., heading practice).
- As per above, if an injury or suspected injury occurs, the coach, team manager or a designated

parent will use the SCORE4BrainHealth phone evaluation and/or CDC checklist to determine the presence of symptoms and next steps as above (e.g., return to play if no symptoms; remain out of play if symptoms).

- Given the serious nature of concussions and the difficulty of diagnosing brain trauma, caution should be used in evaluating symptoms and the return to play.

#### **Part 4 – Return to Play**

- Once a player has been removed from play due to a suspected concussion or has failed the SCORE4BrainHealth or CDC guidelines, medical clearance by a licensed healthcare provider knowledgeable about concussion must be demonstrated prior to the player's participation in any on- or off- field MYS physical activities.
- Once clearance to play has been authorized by a licensed healthcare provider, MYS will institute a gradual return to play.
- Parental consent alone is not acceptable for return to play.
- Coach consent alone is not acceptable for return to play.
- If parents seek a specialized medical evaluation, MYS recommends the SCORE clinic at Children's National Hospital for further evaluation. **Contact information: 202-476-2429**

#### **Part 5 – Baseline Testing**

- Baseline testing is an exam conducted by trained professionals that is used to help assess a person's brain function (including learning and memory skills, ability to pay attention or concentrate, and how quickly he or she thinks and solves problems). Results from baseline testing can be compared to a similar exam if there is a suspected concussion. Ideally, baseline and post-injury tests will be given by the same provider. Of note, baseline testing is helpful, but post-injury care can be provided even without a baseline.
- MYS does not keep baseline test results on its players nor is MYS involved in the administration or the interpretation of baseline test results.

## APPENDIX: CDC CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS LIST

Athletes who experience **any** of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

### Signs Observed by Coaching Staff

- 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 mood, 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” or is “feeling down”

***\*The medical information contained in this Policy is provided as an informational resource only. It is not to be used or relied on for any professional diagnostic or treatment purposes, and should not be used as a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment. Please consult your health care provider before making any medical decisions or for guidance about a specific medical condition. MYS expressly disclaims responsibility, and shall have no liability, for any damages, loss, injury, or liability whatsoever suffered as a result of your reliance on the medical information contained in this Policy.***