



## **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR U.S. SOCCER'S PLAYER SAFETY CAMPAIGN CONCUSSION INITIATIVES & HEADING FOR WV SOCCER ASSOCIATION YOUTH PLAYERS**

The West Virginia Soccer Association is providing the following implementation guidelines for U.S. Soccer's Recognize to Recover Player Safety Campaign, specifically as it relates to concussion initiatives and heading for WVSA youth players:

The U.S. Soccer Federation is recommending, and West Virginia Soccer Association Board of Directors has voted to require all member clubs and leagues to adopt, the new rules as it relates to heading, as follows:

- Players in U11 programs and younger shall not engage in heading, either in practices or in games.
- Limited heading in practice for players in U12 and U13 programs. More specifically, these players shall be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes of heading training per week, with no more than 15-20 headers per player, per week.
- Referees should enforce these restrictions by age group according to the specified rules. Referees will not be assessing the age of individual players on the field; they will enforce the rules for the age group.
- WVSA clubs and leagues are free to set their own standards, as long as the minimum requirements outlined above are met. An example of this would be that clubs/leagues can mandate that no heading would be allowed at any time for U12 and below.

WVSA Travel Clubs need to be aware of the rules that will apply when traveling out of state. Confirm how this rule will be applied with the tournament prior to the event

- In adherence to these new requirements, referees have been instructed by U.S. Soccer of the following rule addition: When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick (IFK) should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

- For travel teams in competitions that have limited substitutions and or no reentry, Modified substitution rules also took effect Jan. 1, 2016, as follows: Any player suspected of suffering a head injury may be substituted for evaluation without the substitution counting against the team's total number of allowed substitutions during the game. Please check with the competition on how this rule will be applied prior to the event.

Questions concerning WVSA referee issues and these rules should be sent to WVSA State Referee Administrator, Mike McCarthy, at [sra-mike@wvsoccer.net](mailto:sra-mike@wvsoccer.net). Questions on other aspects of these rules should be addressed to WVSA Executive Director, Dave Laraba, at [dave@wvsoccer.net](mailto:dave@wvsoccer.net).

For more details, please review the resource linked below.

- USSF Recognize to Recover web page: <http://www.ussoccer.com/about/recognize-to-recover>