

Georgia Soccer Policy on Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) Awareness and Return to Play  
Adopted: November 13, 2017

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## **I. Definitions**

As used in this Policy, the term:

- (a) “Sudden Cardiac Arrest” or “SCA” shall mean a condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating.
- (b) “Soccer Event” shall mean any Georgia Soccer or a Georgia Soccer Affiliate game, athletic contest, competition, scrimmage or practice.
- (c) “Youth Player” shall mean any Georgia Soccer or a Georgia Soccer Affiliate registered participant who is under the age of nineteen (19) years old.
- (d) “Adult Player” shall mean any Georgia Soccer or a Georgia Soccer Affiliate registered participant who is over the age of nineteen (19) years old.
- (e) “Player” shall mean Youth Player and Adult Player.
- (f) “Health Care Provider” or “HCP” shall mean a licensed physician or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in SCA evaluation and management or as otherwise defined in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-324.1(a)(1).

## **II. General Policy Statement**

Georgia Soccer and its Affiliates are united in their dedication to the safety of all their players. Georgia Soccer seeks to avoid player deaths related to a cardiac event, or Sudden Cardiac Arrest. SCA is the leading cause of death in athletes nineteen (19) years old or younger. SCA occurs when the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating. This cuts off blood flow to the brain and other vital organs. SCA is fatal if not treated immediately.

Georgia Soccer and its Affiliates shall follow all Federal, State, and local legal requirements including, but not limited to, a Player’s removal from any Athletic if the Player exhibits symptoms of SCA.

Georgia Soccer requires all Georgia Soccer Affiliates to provide the Georgia Soccer SCA Fact Sheet to every administrator, coach, trainer, and parent/guardian of each Youth Player, and to each Adult Player detailing the nature and warning signs of SCA, including fainting, difficulty breathing, chest pains, dizziness, and abnormal heart rate, as well as the risks associated with continuing to participate in a Soccer Event after experiencing a symptom of SCA. Georgia Soccer’s SCA Fact Sheet shall be publicly available on the Risk Management pages of the Georgia Soccer website ([www.georgiasoccer.org](http://www.georgiasoccer.org)). Every administrator, coach, trainer, parent/guardian of each Youth Player, and each Adult Player shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of the SCA Fact Sheet.

Georgia Soccer requires all coaches, trainers and employees of Georgia Soccer Affiliates to view

the SCA Video. The SCA Video shall be publicly available on the Risk Management pages of the Georgia soccer website ([www.georgiasoccer.org](http://www.georgiasoccer.org)).

Any Player exhibiting signs or symptoms of SCA shall be removed from a Soccer Event immediately and cannot return until the Player is evaluated and approved, in writing, to return by a Health Care Professional.

If a Player is removed from a Soccer Event for signs or symptoms of SCA, Georgia Soccer requires 9-1-1 to be called immediately.

This Policy shall not create any liability for, or create a cause of action against, Georgia Soccer or its Affiliates for any act or omission to act related to the removal or non-removal of a Player from a Soccer Event under this Policy.

### **III. Affiliate Registration and Administration Process**

1. At the time of each Spring and Fall registration or any other time of selection/registration period for any Georgia Soccer managed soccer program, Georgia Soccer Affiliates shall provide the current Georgia Soccer SCA Fact Sheet to all of their administrators, coaches, trainers parents/guardians of Youth Players, and to all Adult Players. Georgia Soccer's SCA Fact Sheet shall be publicly available on the Risk Management pages of the Georgia Soccer website ([www.georgiasoccer.org](http://www.georgiasoccer.org)).

2. All coaches, trainers and employees of Georgia Affiliates are further required to view the SCA Video. The SCA Video shall be publicly available on the Risk Management pages of the Georgia soccer website ([www.georgiasoccer.org](http://www.georgiasoccer.org)).

3. Georgia Soccer Affiliate's administrators, coaches, employees, trainers, Adult Players, and the parents/guardians of Youth Players must sign an acknowledgement that they have received the SCA Fact Sheet. A completed form shall be submitted before each registration. No individual shall coach or train a Soccer Event unless and until the individual has signed and submitted an acknowledgment form of receipt of the SCA Fact Sheet. No Youth Player or Adult Player shall participate in a Soccer Event until the Player (or his/her parent/guardian) has signed and submitted an acknowledgment form of receipt of the SCA Fact Sheet.

4. Every coach, trainer and Affiliate employee shall provide to the Georgia Soccer Affiliate an acknowledgement that they have viewed the SCA Video. No coach, trainer or Affiliate employee coach or train a Soccer Event unless and until the individual has signed and submitted an acknowledgment form of viewing the SCA Video.

5. Georgia Soccer Affiliates shall be responsible for collecting, certifying, and maintaining the records and acknowledgments of the administrators, coaches, trainers, Adult Players, and parents/legal guardians of Youth Players.

6. Each Player shall complete a Medical Release Form, which shall include the Player's head injury and cardiac arrest history. The Medical Release Form shall be kept in the possession of the team

staff /administrator when participating in any Georgia Soccer or its Affiliates' Soccer Events.

7. This Policy applies to all Georgia Soccer and its Affiliates' Soccer Events.

#### **IV. Reporting Procedures**

1. Any Player suspected of exhibiting or experiencing the signs and symptoms of a SCA event shall be immediately removed from the Soccer Event by the coach, trainer or other authorized team official during that Soccer Event (i.e. "When in doubt, pull them out!"). A HCP may also decide to immediately remove the Player. Neither a Player's coach nor Player's trainer can override the decision of a HCP to remove any Player from the Soccer Event.

2. Emergency Medical Services (i.e. 9-1-1) shall be immediately contacted to evaluate and assess a Player if the Player exhibits or experiences the signs and symptoms a SCA.

3. If a Youth Player is suspected of experiencing or having a SCA event at a Soccer Event, the Affiliate will formally report this possibility to the Youth Player's parent/guardian using the Georgia Soccer Notification of Possible SCA form.

4. Any Player who has been removed from a Soccer Event for a possible SCA must receive written clearance from a HCP before being allowed to return to a Soccer Event. The HCP must sign the Georgia Soccer Statement of Release to Return to Play By a Licensed Physician form indicating their evaluation and approval for the Player to return to a Soccer Event.

5. All forms completed under this Policy shall be in duplicate - one copy for the Player and one for the Affiliate for their records.

6. Every team shall have the following forms in its possession available in case of a suspected SCA event during any Soccer Event:

- (a) Georgia Soccer Notification of Possible SCA form;
- (b) Statement of Release to Return to Play By a Licensed Physician form; and
- (c) Refuse Medical Treatment form.

#### **V. Affiliate Record and Reporting Responsibilities to Georgia Soccer**

1. Georgia Soccer incorporates by reference and as if set forth fully below the provisions provided above in Section III.

2. Each Georgia Soccer Affiliate shall be required to submit to Georgia Soccer at the time of the Affiliate's Spring or Fall registration, an electronic confirmation stating that all parents/guardians, players, coaches, assistant coaches, trainers, and administrators have been or will be provided the SCA Fact Sheet. This confirmation shall be part of the Georgia Soccer Affiliation process each year.

3. Georgia Soccer Affiliates must implement this policy by their re-affiliation in Fall 2018, and every season thereafter. Failure to implement this policy shall result in the loss of Georgia Soccer affiliation.

4. This Georgia Soccer Policy shall remain subservient to any current and future Federal, State, local laws and regulations, as well as any laws or regulations established by State or National Youth Soccer policy.

5. Any questions a Georgia Soccer Affiliate may have regarding this Policy shall be directed to the Georgia Soccer Executive Director or the Georgia Soccer Risk Management Committee Chair.

6. An Affiliate's Risk Management Coordinators shall assist an Affiliate's administration in implementing this Policy. Any deviation from this Policy must have the written approval from the Georgia Soccer Board of Directors and notification of its decision must be communicated to the Georgia Soccer Executive Director and the Georgia Soccer Risk Management Committee in a timely manner.

7. An Affiliate's failure to adhere to Items 1, 2 and 7 of Section V may result in the imposition of sanctions as deemed necessary by the Georgia Soccer Board of Directors.

## **VI. Role of Licensed Athletic Trainers, Physicians and Other HCPs at Soccer Events**

1. Georgia Soccer and its Affiliates are strongly encouraged to have, on site for any Soccer Event, a HCP, other Georgia Athletic Trainer Association Board certified athletic trainer or other Georgia licensed athletic trainer working under the supervision of Georgia licensed physician.

2. The athletic trainers provided in Paragraph 1 above may be volunteers or paid by the Georgia Soccer tournament manager, Affiliate or other respective organizer for a Georgia Soccer or Affiliate Soccer Event. Any payments made to an athletic trainer shall be the sole responsibility of the Soccer Event organizer.

3. Any athletic trainer or HCP on-site for a Soccer Event must coordinate with Georgia Soccer or its Affiliate and the respective organizer for the Soccer Event regarding the Georgia Soccer Emergency Action Plan designated for that Soccer Event.

4. Any HCP or athletic trainer provided in Paragraph 1 must complete any paperwork required by Georgia Soccer or its Affiliate and the respective organizer for the Soccer Event to formally document and confirm their legal status. Any HCP must certify he/she is (a) operating under the supervision of a Georgia licensed physician; and (b) trained in the current SCAT and modified BESS concussion evaluation and management skill set. The HCP must complete the Certification to Georgia Soccer of Required Licensure and Training of Georgia Licensed Health Care Providers form.

5. All coaches, trainers, referees and field marshalls shall be notified of the approval and assignment of the HCP at a Soccer Event as well as how to notify the HCP if the HCP's services are required at a Soccer Event. Georgia Soccer recommends that an assigned HCP is present at each venue of a Soccer Event. The assigned HCP shall be responsible for all EMS equipment. Georgia Soccer further recommends the HCP carries an Automated External Defibrillator ("AED").

6. Adult Players and parents/guardians of Youth Players have the right to refuse to let a HCP or licensed athletic trainer treat their child as well as medical advice. The Affiliate must provide a "Refuse

Treatment” form (concurrent with Georgia law) for the Adult Player or parent/guardian of the Youth Player to sign, thereby relieving the Athletic Trainer or HCP of abandonment of the Player. If an Adult Player or parent/guardian of a Youth Player refuses treatment, the Affiliate, coaches, and trainers shall assume that a possible SCA event occurred and shall prohibit the Player from returning to the Soccer Event unless and until the Player receives an evaluation and formal, written clearance from an HCP to return to the Soccer Event. The Affiliate and assigned HCP shall be responsible for collecting, possessing and maintaining any “Refuse Treatment” forms completed at a Soccer Event. If, in the medical opinion of the HCP or athletic trainer, the SCA symptomatic Player requires immediate medical attention, the HCP or athletic trainer should call 9-1-1 and request Emergency Medical Services to respond to the Soccer Event. Nothing in this Section shall prevent other parties from calling Emergency Medical Services if the Player appears to need immediate medical attention.

## **VII. Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (“CPR”) and Automated External Defibrillator (“AED”)**

1. Georgia Soccer strongly recommends that an AED be present at all Soccer Events and at any Georgia Soccer venue.
2. Georgia Soccer strongly recommends that an Affiliate require CPR training to all of its staff and employees and to any coaches or trainers.
3. Despite everyone’s best efforts, sometimes a young athlete will experience SCA. Using an AED and CPR can save the life of a child with SCA.