

March 15, 2016

To: All RSA Coaches; All RSA Referees  
CC: RSA Board Members  
From: Greg Elleman, VP of Referees, Richardson Soccer Association

SUBJ: CONCUSSION AWARENESS AND PROTOCOLS

\*\*\*\*\*EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY\*\*\*\*\*

1. One of the priorities of US Soccer, North Texas Soccer, and Richardson Soccer is player safety. US Soccer has recently published information on concussion training, concussion protocols, and recommendations for heading the ball in certain age groups (Under 11 and younger). The information is evolving continuously, and we want to keep you as informed as possible.
2. For concussion training, please visit the North Texas Soccer website at [www.ntxsoccer.org](http://www.ntxsoccer.org). You will find the links to a "Concussion Awareness Training" video on the homepage. We encourage all players, parents, coaches and referees to watch this video.
3. **For concussion protocols, specific guidance has been given to referees for incidences that occur during games.**

In 2012, referees were provided with 9 "Triggers" to look for when confronted with a possible concussion event. Those 9 triggers or signs are: Motor un-coordination; Loss of Consciousness/lying motionless on the field; Slow to get up; Unsteady walk; Falling to the ground; Grabbing or clutching the head; Dazed or confused; Blank or vacant look; Facial cut in association with any of the above.

**The new Protocol, effective IMMEDIATELY, is as follows:**

- a. All players, including goalkeepers, who leave the field for serious injury, possible concussion, MUST be evaluated by a Health Care Professional (HCP) before being allowed to return to play (RTP)
- b. Prior to the match referees must ask if an HCP is present. (A specific introduction may be needed if a League or Association has not already defined the procedure for requesting the HCP's services.) HCP-Health Care Provider is defined below.
- c. Once the Referee determines that a player must be evaluated for a serious injury, with the possibility of concussion , there are two options if that player seeks to RTP.
  1. The designated HCP present gives the player clearance to return and the referee may allow player re-entry at an appropriate time. (Allowing RTP does not mean that the referee crew should not continue to observe the player for any of the 9 triggers. Observation of any of the signs means play is stopped and the evaluation process/treatment starts over.)

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2. Without an HCP present, if the player enters the field to RTP, the referee must stop play and require the player to again leave the field. (Do not deny re-entry because technically until the player steps onto the field, s/he is not again a player.)
- d. Referees must know the local Rules of Competition for all affiliated games. For example, is there a form to be filled out by the designated HCP and presented to the referee allowing RTP? Even with a signed release the referee crew is still responsible to monitoring the behavior of the player for signs of possible concussion.
- e. Regardless of the HCP requirements, the referee should include a report of any serious injury. Full details would include what was observed, time in the match and all actions taken. Specify whether the player did or did not RTP. Report if and when the player does RTP and any subsequent decision to require the player to leave the field again.

**Health Care Professional (HCP) is defined as a Medical Doctor (MD), Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) or a Certified Trainer (CT). No other designation is under the HCP umbrella for this definition.**

Please note that this protocol is not optional. All Referees MUST abide by the protocol detailed above and do not have the authority to allow a player to return to play without the approval of a Healthcare Provider as defined above. Again, the ONLY entity that may approve a players return to play after being identified as a possible concussion case is a Healthcare Provider as defined above.

\*It is encouraged that coaches make all of their parents, and others associated with their teams, aware of this protocol.

Source:

Concussion Awareness and Protocols email dated 3/10/2016 from David Messersmith from the North Texas Soccer Association.