**GUNSTON SOCCER CLUB (GSC) CONCUSSION POLICY**

Opening Preamble

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that can have a serious effect on a young, developing brain. While most children and teens with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have concussion symptoms that last for days, weeks, or even months.

Not giving the brain enough time to heal after a concussion can be dangerous. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain heals from the first, usually within a short amount of time (hours, days, weeks), can slow recovery or increase the chances for long-term health problems. These may include changes in how the child or teen thinks, feels, and acts, as well as their ability to learn and remember. While rare, a repeat concussion can result in brain swelling or permanent brain damage. It can even be fatal.

A concussion can happen at home, school, or play. So everyone from parents and coaches, to sports leagues officials and school professionals, can play an important role in learning how to spot a concussion, and knowing what to do if they think a child or teen has a concussion.

Basic Concussion Information

* Athletes who have had a concussion, at any point in their lives, have a greater chance of getting another concussion.
* Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and can take longer to recover than adults.
* Recognizing and responding properly to concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

Gunston Soccer Club Concussion Lead

The Club will appoint a Concussion Lead who will be the primary point of contact within the club to ensure all team staff members are educated and provided the materials to prepare for dealing with possible concussion cases. At a minimum the Gunston Concussion Lead shall:

* Identify appropriate local community health care professionals for games and practices to help assess and manage concussion among our athletes.
* Provide the list of local community health care professionals to the teams’ staff.
* Maintain a list of the CDC Certifications for all team staff members within GSC.
* When a player has been removed for a suspected concussion, follow-up with the subject team to ensure that the player has been properly evaluated by a health care professional (receive a copy of the ‘Return to Play Permission Document’).

Team Staff (Coaches/Managers/etc.) Education and Certification

As part of the education process all team staff shall complete the CDC’s “Heads Up” online training and certification ([www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion)). Their certificate shall be forwarded to the appropriate GSC League Representative (who will maintain a list of all team qualifications). League representatives will report team certificate completions/non-completions to the GSC Concussion Lead.

Coaches Game/Training Preparation

Coaches will be ready for an emergency by creating a concussion emergency medical action plan. This plan should include, but not limited to:

* Information for local emergency medical responders and the location of trauma centers.
* Local community health care professionals.
* Concussion Cheat Sheet.
* PAR Concussion Recognition & Response (CRR) Mobile Phone APP

Coaches will work to ensure safer play at all opportunities

* Limit contact drills during practices (when appropriate) to help reduce the chances of injury.
* Check sports equipment: to ensure proper fit; in good condition; stored/secured properly; repaired or replaced when needed.

Develop an injury report to include at a minimum the following:

* Did an injury occur during a game/practice? Yes/No
* Type of injury? (Head, Knee, other)
* How did the injury occur? (player to player, player to ball, other)
* Did player return to play? Yes/No
* Method of informing parent? In person/Via email/Via phone
* Injury Prognosis Recovery follow-up?

Provide this report to the GSC League Representative, who will maintain the report for further usage by the club. If a concussion is suspected the report will be forwarded to the GSC Concussion Lead for follow-up with the subject team coach/manager.

Return to Play Guidelines

When a player has been removed from game play or practice due to a suspected concussion, that player can only return to play or practice after at least 24 hours and with permission from a health care professional. The health care professional should be trained on traumatic brain injury.

Parent and Athlete Information Signature Page Requirement

Each player and one of their parents/guardians must review and sign the Gunston Soccer Club Parent & Athlete Concussion Information Sheet. A copy of this can be found on the GSC Website (<https://bsbproduction.s3.amazonaws.com/portals/8280/docs/gunston%20parent%20%20athlete%20concussion%20information%20sheet.pdf>).

Gunston Soccer Club Concussion Fact Sheets

GSC has posted Fact Sheets (<http://www.gunstonsoccer.com/Default.aspx?tabid=824420>) to educate our members and aid in preparation and identification of concussions.

PAR Concussion Recognition & Response APP (<http://www4.parinc.com/Products/Product.aspx?ProductID=CRR_APP>)

The Concussion Recognition & Response app helps coaches and parents recognize whether an individual is exhibiting and/or reporting the signs and symptoms of a concussion. The app allows a coach or parent to respond quickly and appropriately to this potentially serious medical situation. In less than 5 minutes, the user can complete a checklist of signs and symptoms to determine whether to remove the child from play and the need for further medical examination. The app allows users to record pertinent information regarding a child with a suspected concussion and share that information through e-mail with health care professionals; it also provides a system for post-injury follow-up. With answers to frequently asked questions for parents and coaches, this tool is an invaluable guide for learning about concussions.