

Uniform Approach to Suspected Concussions From incident to diagnosis

Overall guideline to remember: *When in doubt, sit 'em out!*

ASA cares about the kids that take part in our programs and we also care about the adults that work with those kids. With the health of the kids in mind, ASA offers the following information about concussion safety, as well as an approach to follow if an incident takes place that could produce a concussion for one of the participants.

1 - All ASA coaches (staff and volunteers) must go through the Center for Disease Control's online education process: [Heads Up](#). The CDC offers a wealth of info online and you can order some reference [materials for free](#). Information suited for players, parents and coaches is [all found here](#). Another useful resource was created by Taylor Twellman, former MLS and USMNT player: [ThinkTaylor.org](#).

Coaches must then **retain a hard copy document that details the CDC's concussion evaluation process** and have it with them at all ASA activities, or they may opt for the solution presented immediately below.

2 - Coaches must place one of the following free apps on their cellphones to assist with education and on-the-spot review of incidents that may involve concussions:

PAR Concussion Recognition & Response app – [download link](#)

CDC's HEADS UP app - [download link](#)

3 – Coaches must keep a copy of this policy document with them at all ASA activities. They may opt to keep this document with their team med kit or with other team paperwork. The goal is to have this ready as a reference if needed.

4 - During games and practices, ASA coaches need to watch for incidents that most commonly result in concussions, and if such an incident occurs, coaches should be ready to take appropriate actions.

Incidents to watch for include when:

- the player has an unexpected direct hit in the head with the ball
- the player knocks heads with another player's head, knee, foot, or other hard body surface
- there is a strong impact of the player's body on the ground (where the head may or may not have hit the ground)

Symptoms related to concussions include (but are not limited to):

- Nausea
- Feeling Foggy
- Trouble Sleeping
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Just Don't Feel Right Sensitivity to Light/Sound
- Difficulty Focusing
- Balance Problems
- Vision Problems

5 – Following is the recommended approach to follow if an incident takes place:

1. If a player has an incident that may have resulted in a concussion (such as those listed above), that player should always come out of the game to be evaluated on the sideline.
2. Once on the sideline, the player should be evaluated by more than one adult. **Evaluations should be conducted using one of the applications listed above or using materials received from the Heads Up tutorial.** Coaches should communicate with their team parents about this issue and make sure that some of those parents will be available & willing to assist with a sideline evaluation. If professional medical staff is available, that person should be included in the evaluation.
3. The player being evaluated should sit out at least 7 (seven) minutes in order to allow for an unhurried evaluation and enough time for symptoms to be recognized (if they are present).
4. If there is **no doubt** that the player had no effects from the incident, then the player can go back into the game. This assumes that the player is being completely honest about her/his condition.
5. If there is **any doubt** in the minds of any of the adults evaluating the player, then the player sits out for the rest of the game and should be evaluated by a qualified medical professional trained in diagnosing concussions. A note (from that qualified medical professional) clearing the player's continued participation must be seen by the coach before the player participates again.