



Tennessee State Soccer Association: Concussion Initiative (per USSF recommendations)

May 27, 2016

As part of the United States Soccer Federation (USFF) Concussion Initiative, Tennessee State Soccer Association (TSSA) will be **prohibiting** players age 10 and younger from heading the ball in practice and games. The intent of the initiative and the new rules that TSSA will be implementing is for safety of the player. The new rules will exist for our membership and sanctioned events of TSSA. These new rules may be the same or different when playing in sanctioned events outside of Tennessee. The rules will apply to both player and level of competition. Age 10 and younger will be specifically cited for the player and U11 is the referred age group to assist with the practical implementation of the rule. Since U11 teams are made of players who will be turning 11 and 10 years of age, we must prohibit heading within the entire level of competition.

This means that U9-U11 competitive and U3-U11 recreational will NOT be allowed to head the ball during training or games. When and if a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick (IFK) will be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the IFK should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. The USSF will be providing this information to state referee programs and coaching education.

If a club has approved a player to play up in an older age group (ex. 10-year-old playing with a U12 team), please note that players who are 10 and younger should NOT be heading the ball regardless of the age group in which they play. This requires education and support from the coach and parent to instruct the player accordingly.

For players that are 11, 12, and 13 years old, the USSF recommendation will be that heading is allowed in games. TSSA will follow that recommendation in their rules but is should be noted that heading be limited in training. The recommendation will be that heading is limited to a maximum of 30 minutes per week with no more than 15-20 headers per player, per week. The USSF will provide this information in its coaching education courses and will direct coaches to check with local and state rules of competition.

| <u>Ages</u> | <u>Training</u> | <u>Games</u> |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| U3-U11 | <i>NO Heading</i> | <i>NO Heading</i> |
| U12-U13 | 30 Minutes/Week | No Restrictions |
| U14-U19 | No Restrictions | No Restrictions |