
RECOGNIZE TO RECOVER

CHICAGO (Dec. 2, 2015) – The United States Soccer Federation today introduced a comprehensive player health and safety program called Recognize to Recover. The first-of-its-kind program aims to reduce injuries in soccer players of all ages and promote safe play by those on and around the field.

Recognize to Recover was developed with the help of medical experts and will provide coaches, players, parents and referees with information, guidance and educational materials to improve the prevention and management of injuries.

“Recognize to Recover will lead to better awareness and understanding of player health and safety initiatives and strengthen the role parents, players, coaches and officials play in preventing, protecting and addressing injuries,” said U.S. Soccer Chief Medical Officer George Chiampas. “While U.S. Soccer is launching the framework of Recognize to Recover today, this is just the beginning as more information around specific areas of focus will be rolled out in the coming months.”

Information about head injuries, including new guidelines regarding concussions, will be included in the program, along with other important player health and safety topics such as heat-related illness and dehydration, heart health, nutrition and injury prevention.

“As the national governing body of our sport, U.S. Soccer is committed to being the leader in lasting change that has a positive impact on the game,” said U.S. Soccer President Sunil Gulati. “We created Recognize to Recover to elevate player health and safety and bring players, coaches, parents and officials together to help ensure safe play at all levels of our sport.”

As part of Recognize to Recover, U.S. Soccer recently presented overall concussion guidelines that include rule changes that will reduce the possibility of head injuries while preserving the nature of the game. Players suspected of a concussion will be given plenty of time for evaluation by a health care professional without penalty or loss of a substitute. U.S. Soccer is also recommending that heading the ball be prohibited for children 10 and under, and to limit the activity to practice only for children ages 11 to 13.

“We know that the vast majority of concussions occur when there is contact between players trying to head the ball,” said Chiampas. “Whether that is head-to-head contact, elbow-to-head or their head hitting the ground while challenging for the ball in the air; by reducing the number of those aerial challenges to head the ball, we believe we will decrease the incident of concussions.”

“While the science on head injuries is still developing, these rule changes and recommendations are based on the advice of the U.S. Soccer medical committee. As we continue to learn more, we’ll have the flexibility to adapt to the findings and make the appropriate changes.”

As part of Recognize to Recover, U.S. Soccer will be working directly with current and former players to spread the message about the importance of player health and safety. More information about those player ambassadors will be provided in the near future.