



Ten Questions to Ask Youth Sports Organizations About Head Safety

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In whatever sport a child chooses, to feel more comfortable and confident with their participation as it relates to concussion risk, parents must do their homework and ask questions of the league and coaches about how they handle head safety. A parent needs to feel at ease that the safety is treated as a priority. At a youth football Q&A event in Virginia in 2012, the commissioner of the NFL, Roger Goodell, was asked by a parent how to be assured of their child's head safety by the youth sports league. He responded with an excellent question "How many of you would send your child to a babysitter without first checking on them for safety, quality, etc.? You need to do the same with their sports activities." In following this advice, we encourage parents to ask the following 10 questions, and we encourage all youth sports organizations to properly prepare themselves for these questions.

TCYFL places player safety number one above all other aspects of the game. TCYFL answered the questions below. We are very confident that you will be pleased to see our response to making safety a priority!

1. Does the league have a general policy in how they manage concussions? **Yes, communicated to our coaches and families**
2. Does the league have access to healthcare professionals with knowledge and training in sport-related concussion? **Yes, we have established relationships with leaders in their field**
3. Are the coaches required to take a concussion education and training course? **Yes, as part of their mandatory certification**
4. Who is responsible for the sideline concussion recognition and response to suspected concussions during practice and games? **TCYFL coaches are trained to recognize signs of a concussion and take the appropriate action. TCYFL also has professional athletic trainers provided by Accelerated Rehabilitation Centers (ARC) available on the sidelines of every TCYFL sanctioned game.**
5. Do the coaches have readily available the tools - concussion signs & symptoms cards, clipboards, fact sheets, smartphone apps, etc. - during practice and games to guide proper recognition and response of a suspected concussion? **Yes**
6. Does the league provide concussion education for the parents, and what is the policy for informing parents of suspected concussions? **Yes. Appropriate emergency personnel, as well as, the player parent or guardian are notified as soon as possible if an incident occurs.**
7. What is the policy regarding allowing a player to return to play? [Correct answer – when an appropriate medical professional provides written clearance that the athlete is fully recovered and ready to return.] **TCYFL has a complete assessment and return to play policy in place that all coaches have been versed on. Return to play is determined by a medical professional.**
8. Does the league teach/ coach proper techniques (e.g., blocking and tackling in football, checking in hockey and lacrosse) in a way that are "head safe" by not putting the head in position to be struck? If the player does demonstrate unsafe technique during practice or a game, do the coaches re-instruct them with the proper technique/ method? Is head and neck strengthening taught? **Yes. Heads Up tackling is a core element of our training and teaching. TCYFL has fully adopted Heads Up blocking & tackling. Continued teaching and instructions are used throughout the season to reinforce proper technique with our players.**
9. If a contact sport, are there limitations to the amount of contact? How often (# days per week, # minutes per practice) do you practice with live contact? Is that any different than past years? **Yes. TCYFL rules allow for a maximum of eight hours of practice per week with four hours maximum of full contact drills in season and a maximum of ten hours of practice per week with six hours maximum of full contact drills in pre season.**
10. How amenable is the league/ team / coach to accepting feedback from parents about their child's safety as it relates to head safety? **TCYFL always welcomes parent input or feedback regarding their player's safety**

If you have any questions regarding our health & safety policies, methods or training, please let us know.

<http://www.tcyfl.net/members.php>