

## **Plum Area Youth Soccer First Aid Policy**

Plum Area Youth Soccer (PAYS) works to ensure the safety and well-being of each and every player and coach, at every playing and training venue.

PAYS does not have the personnel or resources to provide a qualified first aid practitioner at every playing or training venue. However, PAYS is committed to ensuring that suitably designated club officials (coaches and team managers) are present at each venue when playing or training occurs.

Coaches and team managers in charge of players are expected to use their best endeavors at all times, particularly in emergencies, to secure the welfare of players during any PAYS sponsored activities, matches, and training sessions. It is worthwhile to remember that, in general, the consequences of taking no action are likely to be more serious than those of trying to assist in an emergency.

PAYS carries insurance through PAWest Soccer Association. It is secondary coverage. To view this policy or to obtain claim forms, please visit [www.pawest-soccer.org](http://www.pawest-soccer.org)

PAYS has a well-equipped and fully stocked first aid kit hanging on the wall in the storage garage at Larry Mills Park. A defibrillator is also hanging on the wall in the storage garage. Ice packs are located in the storage garage or ice bags may be retrieved from the Concession Stand.

In case of an accident:

- Call 911 for EMS!
- Open any clogged airways
- Stabilize the injured person
- For cuts, put pressure on the injured area until treated medically
- For heart victims, the PA Good Samaritan Act protects volunteers using our defibrillator

Always check with parents from both home and visiting teams to see if any are in the medical field just in case an emergency should arise.

### **Prevention and Care**

An integral component of all coaching and playing activity throughout the season must be the prevention and management of injury to players and coaches. There are numerous simple tasks a coach can and should do in order to secure the health of his or her players. Before the season begins, the coach should make sure all parents know the emergency procedures for all situations including injuries, accidents, weather problems, etc. This procedure should be clear and simple.

### **Field Safety/Weather Conditions**

Before starting practice or a game, it is the responsibility of the coach to check the field for dangerous objects. Glass and other sharp objects can be found on fields, as well as holes and other hazards. Any hazard must be removed or repaired to ensure a safe playing surface for the players. Goals need to be inspected and anchored properly, or moved away from the playing area if not being used. When moving goals, it is important to utilize adults and to supervise them, as often it is the first time they are moving goals.

At every field coaches need to look to see where they can take their team in case of lightning or heavy rain. If a place does not exist then enough parents must remain present to watch practices and games in order that all the players can fit in a car in case of severe weather. At the first sign of lightning, players are to be moved to a safe environment.

## **Second Adult Present**

PAYS requires that there is always a minimum of two adults at every practice and game. This allows one person to care for injuries or bathroom breaks as the other tends to the rest of the team. It also provides for another witness in the case of injury or accident. It is the Head Coach's responsibility to remain present after any training session or match until the parents of the last child arrive. If the Head Coach is not available to remain present then he or she needs to identify someone to stay in their place. Coaches should stress to parents to arrive on time to pick up their children.

## **Injury Prevention**

Before the season starts, coaches should check to see if they have a player on their team who has a parent that is a doctor or nurse. Coaches are responsible for asking parents if their children have any pre-existing conditions and how they normally deal with these conditions. Parents are also responsible for notifying the coach of any physical or health related conditions that their child may have that would impact their ability to play soccer and be treated for injury. Head Coaches are responsible for having a simple first aid kit and ice (or ice packs) at all events. If necessary, PAYS will provide. All players must wear shin-pads and arrive at practices and games with water.

## **What To Do In Case of Injury**

When a player goes down with an injury, it is important for the coaches and parents to remain calm. At a minimum, coaches are responsible for checking for responsiveness and calling for help, it is important to check ABC's. ABC's stand for Airway, Breathing, and Circulation.

The most likely injury occurrences in soccer include two children running into each other and banging heads or being kicked in the leg or body, heat exhaustion, prior medical issues (i.e. inhalers) and dehydration. Coaches are responsible for notifying the parents of an injured player if their son or daughter was hurt during a practice or game.

### Cuts

If blood is involved, whoever is treating the injury should wear latex gloves for protection. It is important to clean the wound and apply a clean, sterile bandage. If a deep cut, apply light pressure to the wound to control bleeding. A parent or guardian should immediately take the player to a medical facility for a professional opinion.

### Head injuries

When approaching a player that has suffered an apparent blow to the head, it is important to not try and move them until whoever is attending to the player is able to establish communication with them and can confirm they are conscious and in no immediate severe pain. If the player is unresponsive, immediately call 911. Players who suffer a head trauma are not to be moved as there may be internal damage. The only time to consider moving an unconscious player is if their airway is obviously blocked due to the position of their head and body (i.e., face down with face in the grass). If a player is responsive it is important to ask them to identify where they were struck (head, face, jaw or neck area) and if and where they are experiencing any pain. If the player is experiencing any pain, dizziness, or nausea, they should be removed from the field and not be considered for re-entry into the game. If a parent or guardian is not present the

Head Coach or his or her designee must immediately contact the parents so that they are aware of the nature of the injury and can decide if they want to take their child to a medical facility.

### Heat exhaustion

A player who is experiencing heat exhaustion may feel sick and dizzy, have a high body temperature, and is still sweating. Heat exhaustion can come on suddenly. Coaches are to have the player stop playing, find some shade, and cool the player down by using cool water on their clothes, head and neck. Ice is not to be used as it may shock the body and can be dangerous. Cool water is to be used to gradually reduce body temperature. The player should also take sips of water to ensure proper hydration.

### Abrasions

Abrasions are very common sports injuries that are usually caused by a fall on a hard surface. As the player falls or slides on the ground, friction causes layers of skin to rub off. General treatment of abrasions includes treating the area by cleaning the wound with mild soap and water or a mild antiseptic wash like hydrogen peroxide, and then covering the area with an antibiotic ointment and a dry dressing. Whoever is treating the injury should wear latex gloves for protection.

### Heat stroke

If a player shows signs of heat stroke their sweating will stop, the player may be confused or dizzy, have pale skin, an extremely dry mouth or be unconscious. An ambulance should be contacted immediately as this can be life threatening. While waiting for the ambulance, similar steps to that which are taken for heat exhaustion should be followed. It is the responsibility of the coaches, players and parents to ensure that players remain properly hydrated to help prevent heat injuries.

### Nose Bleed

Whoever is treating the player should make sure that the player is in a sitting position with their head forward. Pressure is to be applied just below the bridge of the nose. Use ice when necessary. Whoever is treating the injury should wear latex gloves for protection. If a head or neck injury is suspected then do not try to control the bleeding. Instead, the head should be stabilized and someone is to call 911.

### Fractures & Dislocations

If a body part does not have a normal appearance or function then suspect a fracture. It is important to not move the player. Whoever is treating the player should keep the player warm and made as comfortable as possible, and then call 911. With a possible dislocation, the joint will have a marked deformity with intense pain. If a player can walk, the joint should be immobilized and a parent or guardian should immediately take the player to a medical facility for a professional opinion. If the player is unable to walk then someone is to call 911.

### Sprains, Strains and Contusions

Strains are injuries that affect muscles or tendons, thick bands that attach muscles to bones. They occur in response to a quick tear, twist, or pull of the muscle. Strains are an acute type of injury that results from overstretching or over contraction. Pain, weakness, and muscle spasms are common symptoms experienced after a strain occurs.

Sprains are injuries that affect ligaments, thick bands of cartilage that attach bone to bone. They occur in response to a stretch or tear of a ligament. Sprains are an acute type of injury that results from trauma such as a fall or outside force that displaces the surrounding joint from its normal alignment. Sprains can range from a mild ligamentous stretch to a complete tear. Bruising, swelling, instability, and painful movement are common symptoms experienced after a sprain occurs.

Contusions or a bruise is caused when blood vessels are damaged or broken as the result of a blow to the skin.

R.I.C.E. Principle (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation) is the best method of dealing with injuries involving a sprain, strain or contusion. These 4 immediate first aid measures can relieve pain, limit swelling and protect the injured tissues.

Two important factors with dealing with field injuries of this nature:

1. If you see clear visual evidence of abnormal deformity to the injured area, call emergency professional care immediately or take the player to a medical facility for a professional opinion.
2. If symptoms persist (pain, swelling, severe bruising) after 24-48 hours of using the R.I.C.E. method, consult a doctor.