



RIVER CITY ATHLETICS

Title: Player Development and Safety Policy	
Standard Operating Procedure / Club Policy	Date Distributed:
Initial Effective Date: 2025/26 Season	Date Last Revised: 11/28/2025
Author: Wayne Harvey	
Presented To Board of Directors Date: 10/5/2025	Board Vote: Unanimous
Supersedes:	Dated:

SCOPE All River City Players and Coaches

PURPOSE This policy is designed to ensure that River City Athletics provides a safe and supportive environment for youth soccer players, promoting their physical development while safeguarding their health and well-being.

POLICY To foster a safe and supportive environment that promotes player development while prioritizing health and safety. This policy aligns with U.S. Soccer guidelines, the CDC’s HEADS UP concussion protocols, and best practices in youth sports injury prevention.

PROCEDURE –

1. Physical Fitness and Injury Prevention
 - A. Conditioning and Warm-Up
 - Warm-Ups: Prior to each practice and game, players will engage in warm-up exercises to increase heart rate and prepare muscles for activity.
 - Cool-Down Procedures: Post-activity, players will participate in cool-down exercises, including static stretching, to promote flexibility and reduce muscle stiffness.
 - B. Strength and Agility Training
 - Age-Appropriate Exercises: Training programs will include exercises to enhance strength, balance, and coordination, tailored to the developmental stage of the players.
 - Progressive Load: Intensity and volume of exercises will increase gradually to prevent overuse injuries.
 - C. Equipment Safety
 - Proper Gear: Players are required to wear appropriate and well-maintained equipment, including shin guards and soccer cleats, during all activities.
 - Facility Safety: Coaches will ensure that playing surfaces are free from hazards, and equipment is in good condition.

2. Concussion Awareness and Management
 - A. Concussion Education
 - Mandatory Training: All coaches, staff, and board members must complete the CDC’s HEADS UP to Youth Sports Coaches online training prior to engaging with players.

- Parental Involvement: Parents are encouraged to complete the CDC’s concussion training to better understand the signs and risks associated with concussions

B. Recognition and Response

- Immediate Action: If a concussion is suspected, the player will be removed from play immediately.
- Medical Evaluation: The player must be evaluated by a licensed healthcare professional before returning to any soccer activities.

C. Return-to-Play Protocol

- Graduated Process: Players will follow a step-by-step return-to-play protocol, progressing through stages only if they remain symptom-free for 24 hours at each level.
- Medical Clearance: A licensed healthcare professional must provide written clearance before a player returns to full participation.

D. Heading Restrictions

- Under 11 Years: Heading is prohibited in both games and practices.
- Ages 11–13: Heading is limited to a maximum of 30 minutes per week during practice, with no more than 15–20 headers per player per week.
- Ages 14 and Above: No restrictions on heading, but proper technique will be emphasized to minimize risk.

3. Implementation and Compliance

A. Monitoring and Enforcement

- Regular Audits: The Director of Coaching along with the Boys and Girls Directors will conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Incident Reporting: Any injuries or suspected concussions must be reported immediately to the Director of Coaching along with the Boys or Girls Director.

B. Policy Review

- Annual Review: This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and updated as necessary to align with current best practices and regulatory requirements

REFERENCES

ATTACHMENTS

NA

This document was approved by the committee(s) noted below on the date(s) as noted: