

## Concussions: What Must Be Done And Why

The Wisconsin Legislature passed a law that went into effect on April 17, 2012 regarding concussions in youth athletic activities and defines a youth athletic activity “as an organized athletic activity in which the participants, a majority of whom are under 19 years of age, are engaged in an athletic game or competition against another team, club, or entity, or in practice or preparation for an organized athletic game or competition against another team, club, or entity.” Youth athletic activity” does not include a college or university activity or an activity that is incidental to a nonathletic program.”

Under the Law, everyone who is participating in Youth Hockey must be trained and players must sign a statement that they were trained. If those players are under the age of 19, a parent or guardian must also sign a statement that states they were trained. WAHA has developed such documents and are available on our web site along with associated training materials. WAHA is also mandating that all coaches sign a statement that they have been trained as well and that document, along with the training materials for coaches, is also on our web site. The President of every Association is required to sign a compliance document for their specific club. This document will act as official documentation that all coaches, players and parents have been trained as spelled out in the law. This document will be sent to the WAHA Secretary and kept on file in the WAHA offices. Associations not filing this compliance document by November 15<sup>th</sup> of each season will not be allowed to enter WAHA State Tournaments or Playoffs and will be considered as “not in good standing” with WAHA, and subject to suspension as defined in the WAHA By-Laws, Article 9.

The law requires immediate removal of an individual from a youth athletic activity if symptoms indicate a possible concussion has been sustained. An individual, who has been removed from a youth athletic activity because of a determined or suspected concussion or head injury, may not participate again until he or she is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance from the health care provider to return to the activity.

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) was instrumental in getting this law enacted. Because of their involvement, the law states the Department of Public Instruction in consultation with the WIAA shall develop guidelines and other materials for the purpose of educating athletic coaches and pupil athletes and their parents or guardians about the nature and risk of concussion and head injury in youth athletic activities. The WIAA has developed several items for the purpose of educating everyone on concussions and head injuries and their web site has all of these materials, including videos.

WAHA has developed WAHA specific materials; however we encourage everyone to visit the WIAA web site, [www.wiaawi.org](http://www.wiaawi.org), to view extensive educational materials on concussions and head injuries in youth athletic activities. Also, more information is available from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The web site is [www.cdc.gov/concussions](http://www.cdc.gov/concussions).

The law also requires this training be done at the beginning of “each” season. So no matter who was trained this season, anyone participating, coaching and all parents, must be trained again next season and every season hereafter.

