



U.S. Soccer Concussion Initiative

Heading the Ball Restrictions



OSYSA Youth Playing Rules

The “No Heading Rule” (as per OSYSA ByLaws) has been in effect since July 1, 2016 for **all** league or tournament **U-11 and younger** games played in Ohio South.



OSYSA ByLaw 20.2

- All players who are registered on or participate with any U11s or younger team are prohibited from **deliberately** striking a soccer ball with any portion of their head, (a.k.a. heading), during any game, practice, tryout, or other soccer related activity.
- If an U11s or younger player engages in heading a soccer ball during games, practices, tryouts, or other soccer related activities, contrary to the above listed prohibition, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the player accept the risk and/or peril of doing so.



OSSRC Heading the Ball Restrictions



- 1) *If a player in a U11(9v9), U10 (7v7) or younger age group match **deliberately** heads the ball in a game with any portion of their head, an indirect free kick (IFK) is to be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the infraction.*
- 2) *If the ball makes contact with a player's head and the player has **not deliberately** played or attempted to play the ball, then play should continue as no infraction has occurred.*



OSSRC Heading the Ball Restrictions



- 3) *A player shall **not** be cautioned nor sent-off for persistent infringement, as a result of a heading infraction.*

- 4) *A player shall **not** be cautioned nor sent-off for denying an obvious goal scoring opportunity (DOGSO), as a result of a heading infraction.
*It is not a handling offense and it is not an offense committed against an opponent ... therefore criteria for committing a DOGSO offense does not exist.**



OSSRC Heading the Ball Clarifications



- *Heading of the ball is allowed in U12 and older age group matches without limitations.*
- *Referees are to enforce the heading restrictions by age group of the team in accordance with these specified rules.*
- *Referees will not be assessing the age of individual players on the field ... they will only enforce the rules for the age group.*



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Heading the Ball

Clarifications

- *Advantage shall **not** be implemented when a heading infraction occurs which would allow play to continue. **Exception: When a ball goes directly into the goal from a header by a defending player into their own goal (e.g. with no subsequent play on the ball) the goal should be awarded. This is the only time an advantage should be applied.***
- *This rule is primarily a SAFETY issue, which needs to be addressed immediately, such that it does not occur again.*
- *This is **not** an infraction where the player needs to be punished, i.e. with a caution or send-off. Again, it is a **self-inflicted** safety issue.*



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Heading the Ball

Clarifications



- *It may be acceptable to have the player leave the game (much like an injury) such that the coach can talk to the player.*
 - *This is not a mandate ... solely at the discretion of the referee.*
 - *More likely to implemented, if deliberate heading is repeated.*
 - *Player would be allowed back in the game at the team's next substitution time.*
 - *Again, this is not intended to be a punishment, but instead a teaching moment.*



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Explanations



- *As a referee or an AR you must determine if ball and head contact was a **deliberate** act by the player.*
 - ❑ *Ball to head ... not deliberate*
 - ❑ *Head to ball ... deliberate*
- *Similar to determining a handling foul ... expect to hear “Headball, Ref”, as an added complaint from the sidelines.*