

SAINT JOSEPH ROCKET & FLAG FOOTBALL INC.

Player Safety Policy

Objective: The organization strives for our players to have the best experience possible. While teaching the players important skills is a priority, we also ensure the players are doing so in a safe manner. This policy addresses injury reporting, volunteer requirements, concussion protocol, heat & humidity and inclement weather.

Requirements for player assessment and injury reporting:

The following are the steps that should be taken for any injury during the season. These steps are required for any medical volunteers or coaches for **Flag and Tackle football**.

1. For any suspected injuries the person evaluating (medical volunteer/coach) will assess the player and make the determination for any further treatments/actions.
2. For any injuries the medical volunteer/coach must fill out the designated form and turn into the Director of Player Safety within 24 hours. All forms can be found online or requested by the Safety Director. **Any injuries involving the head, neck, spine or deformities must be reported to the Director of Player Safety within 24 hours.**
 - ❖ ***Per the state of Michigan, any suspected concussions must be referred out for further evaluation by a medical professional. (See Concussion Protocol Action Plan)***
3. Any player who is referred for further medical evaluation, must provide a release from their medical provider before the player can resume activity. The release form must be turned into the Director of Player Safety before the player can resume activity.
 - ❖ ***Any suspected concussions will not be allowed to participate in any activity until the state required release form has been received by the Director of Player Safety.***
4. The Director of Player Safety will follow up with the coach or parents as needed. Release forms and injuries will be documented accordingly and saved on the share drive.

Requirements for medical volunteers:

The following will describe what is expected for all medical volunteers. These will pertain to **Flag and Tackle football**.

1. Qualifications for volunteering for the medical team are as follows:
 - ❖ MD, NP, PA, RN, LPN, EMT
 - *Other qualifications can be considered on a case by case basis. **Determination will be made by the Safety Director.***

Requirements for medical volunteers and coaches:

1. All medical volunteers and coaches must sign off that they have read and understand the Player Safety Policy.
2. All medical volunteers, coaches and volunteers working directly with players are required to pass a background check. The cost will be covered by SJRF Organization. All background checks are required before volunteering can commence. The Safety Director will validate that all requirements have been completed prior to volunteering. Coaches will also complete a coaching certification through USA Football that addresses health and safety issues.

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Concussion Protocol:

We must comply with the Michigan Sports Concussion Law, Public Act 137 of 2017; Section 333.9155 and 333.9156:

A concussion is a brain injury, caused by a blow, bump or jolt to the head that can have serious consequences. It can occur in any sport or recreational activity.

Michigan was the 39th U.S. state to enact a law that regulates sports concussions and return to athletic activity. The law went into full effect on June 30th, 2013, and was amended in October of 2017.

The sports concussion legislation requires all coaches, employees, volunteers, and other adults involved with a youth athletic activity to complete a concussion awareness on-line training program, which must be re-taken every three years, or more frequently as determined by DHHS.

The organizing entity must provide educational materials on the signs/symptoms and consequences of concussions to each youth athlete and their parents/guardians and obtain a signed statement acknowledging receipt of the information for the organizing entity to keep on record.

The law also requires immediate removal of an athlete from physical participation in an athletic activity who is suspected of sustaining a concussion. The student athlete must then receive written clearance from an appropriate health professional before he or she can return to physical activity. The following is from the CDC:

Concussion Signs Observed

- Can't recall events prior to or after a hit or fall.
- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent.
- Moves clumsily.
- Answers questions slowly.
- Loses consciousness (even briefly).
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes.

Concussion Symptoms Reported

- Headache or "pressure" in head.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision.
- Bothered by light or noise.
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy.
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems.
- Just not "feeling right," or "feeling down".

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Concussion Protocol Action Plan

The following concussion protocol action plan must be followed when a concussion is suspected. Please keep the concussion signs and symptoms information and have it available at practice and games or download the Heads Up Concussion App from the CDC. It has signs and symptoms and the protocol steps that must be followed.

STEP 1: REMOVE THE PLAYER FROM PLAY.

STEP 2: INFORM THE ATHLETE'S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE CONCUSSION ASAP. HELP THEM LOCATE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS CONCERNING CONCUSSION. INFORM PARENTS THAT THEY MUST BE SEEN AND CLEARED BY A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL BEFORE RETURNING TO PRACTICE OR PLAY.

STEP 3: REPORT SUSPECTED CONCUSSION TO ST JOE FLAG AND ROCKET FOOTBALL DIRECTOR OF PLAYER SAFETY AND ENSURE MEDICAL CLEARANCE RETURN TO PLAY FORM IS RECEIVED BEFORE ALLOWING ATHLETE TO RETURN.

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Policy for Managing Heat & Humidity

We have modified the MHSAA Policy on managing heat and humidity to be more stringent due to the age of our players. The risk of heat-related health problems significantly increases when the heat index exceeds 90 degrees.

1. Thirty minutes prior to the start of an activity, and again 60 minutes after the start of that activity, take temperature and humidity readings at the site of the activity. Using a digital sling psychrometer . The Field Director or Player Safety Director will take the readings.

2. If the Heat Index is below 95 degrees:

- Provide ample amounts of water. This means that water should always be available and athletes should be able to take in as much water as they desire.
- Optional water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration.
- Ice-down towels for cooling.
- Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action

3. If the Heat Index is 95 degrees to 98.9 degrees:

- All of the above and all equipment will be removed.
- Consider postponing or shortening practice.
- Recheck temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor for increased Heat Index.

4. If the Heat Index is above 99 degrees

- All practices are cancelled.

When the temperature is below 80 degrees there is no combination of heat and humidity that will result in need to curtail activity.

Summary:

Cancellation of practice if the Heat Index is 99 degrees or above and no equipment practices when the Heat Index is 95-98.9.

Please note that this is the heat index and not the temperature. The heat index is the combined effect of heat and humidity on the air. To approximate the heat index, there is an OSHA heat index app that will calculate heat index either based on local conditions or you can manually enter data to see how increased humidity affects the heat index. When those approximations show a threat of high heat index, we have a psychrometer and will take readings at the field and communicate any practice changes or cancellations. If possible bring a cooler with some towels soaking in ice water for these conditions.

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Signs & Symptoms of Heat Stroke

Regarded as a medical emergency, heat stroke can lead to organ damage and even death. Often the final stage of progressive heat-related sensations, heat stroke can sometimes strike without any previous symptoms of heat injury. Often occurring alongside dehydration, heat stroke occurs when the body's core temperature exceeds 105 degrees Fahrenheit. When this happens, the central nervous system is unable to function effectively, resulting in everything from brain damage to organ failure to death.

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

While body temperature provides a definitive sign of heat stroke, fainting is often the first symptom. Other signals include:

1. Intense headache
2. Light-headedness or dizziness
3. Lack of sweat
4. Hot, dry or red skin
5. Muscle cramps or weakness
6. Vomiting or nausea
7. Weak or rapid heartbeat
8. Shallow, rapid breathing
9. Seizures
10. Staggering, disorientation or confusion

Action Plan:

Without proper attention, heat stroke can result in life-altering or life-ending consequences. If you see someone exhibiting symptoms of heat stroke, call 911 or immediately take the person to the emergency room. While you are waiting for emergency personnel to arrive, employ the following strategies to bring the person's core temperature down.

- Move the person to a cool, shady area.
- Remove unnecessary clothing.
- Wet the person's skin.
- Fan the person.
- Apply ice packs to the neck, groin, armpits and back.
- Immerse the person in a tub of cool water.

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Inclement Weather Policy:

Please observe the following policy when inclement weather threatens practice time

A. When lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the contest must be suspended. The occurrence of lightning or thunder is not subject to interpretation or discussion — lightning is lightning; thunder is thunder.

B. When lightning is observed or thunder is heard and the contest is suspended, contestants shall not return to the playing field until lightning has been absent from the local sky and thunder has not been heard for 30 minutes.

C. Spectators shall be advised of the action being taken to seek shelter.

Since practice is only for a couple of hours, it is probably best to cancel your practice if thunder and/or lightning are present. The officiating crew will be in charge of game delays.

**For any further questions, please reach out to the Director of Player Safety.
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