

# **PRINCETON SOCCER ASSOCIATION**

## **SAFETY GUIDELINES AND RULES**

Princeton Soccer Association is committed to minimizing the risk of injury to all who participate in its programs -- players, trainers, coaches, parents, and visitors. We have established these safety guidelines and rules regarding soccer goals, field conditions and equipment, with the goal of eliminating all preventable accidents and injuries.

The successful application of PSA's safety guidelines and rules will require *education, communication* and *responsibility* on an ongoing basis from all who put these important objectives into practice. Please help us meet our goal of preventing all preventable accidents and injuries by following these rules.

### **SOCCER GOAL SAFETY**

A number of deaths and injuries have occurred when soccer goals are abused. This can happen when a child ***climbs or hangs*** on goals or nets; ***from high winds*** blowing over goals; or during ***relocation*** of goals. The main safety problem with goals is their design -- there is nothing in front to prevent them from tipping forward. Therefore, ***goals must be properly secured*** to the ground at all times.

Injuries have also occurred due to ***sharp edges; broken parts; loose and missing bolts,*** and hazardous ***pinch points.***

Goal accidents are directly attributable to the failure to: warn against climbing or hanging on goals; properly anchor and counterweight goals; and failure to regularly inspect and maintain goals.

***In light of these safety risks, the following PSA Goal Safety RULES shall apply at all times:***

- **All goals must be inspected by a coach or trainer before every practice and every game, home or away to ensure that :**
  - **Both goals are securely anchored or counterweighted\*.**
  - **Neither goal contains any sharp or broken parts, missing or loose bolts, hazardous pinch points, or other dangers\*.**
  - **(specifications for each PSA home field are in the Appendix).**
- **Routinely tell players never to hang from goals or nets.**
- **All goals must be securely anchored, or counter-weighted at all times\*.**
- **Relocate movable goals using extreme caution and using coaches, trainers, or supervised mature players. Goals should be slowly lowered to their face and carried on both posts and the crossbar by a sufficient number of people. Goals should be set down on a flat surface and immediately anchored. Keep young players away while goals are being moved.**
- **All PSA home goals must have “NEVER CLIMB ON GOAL” and “ALWAYS ANCHOR GOAL” CPSC warning labels attached on the outside of each down-post and in the middle of the underside of the crossbar.**
- **When not in use, the following shall apply, by order of preference, to storing movable goals:**
  1. **Place goal in a face down position and anchor, or chain goal to nearby fixed object, such that it cannot tip over;**
  2. **Place multiple goals face down, nested together, or face-to-face and chain them together; or**
  3. **Store on flat/level surfaces, away from slopes and inclines, preferably face down.**
- **PSA coaches, trainers and parents must continuously educate players and remind each other of the potential dangers associated with goals; be alert to those dangers; and always act according to these rules.**

## **FIELD SAFETY**

Unsafe field conditions also present a risk of injury.

***In light of these safety risks, the following PSA Field Safety RULES shall apply at all times:***

- ***All fields must be inspected by a coach or trainer before every practice and every game, home or away, to look for the following on or near the field:***
  - ***Holes or raised/sunken sprinkler heads\*.***
  - ***Sticks, rocks, broken glass and other sharp objects\*.***
  - ***Excessive mud, especially in front of a goal\*.***
  - ***Corner flags which are not structurally sound or are not 5 feet tall\*.***
  - ***Bleachers, chairs, barrels, player equipment and dogs, etc., which are too close to the field.***

\*Correct any goal or field condition that presents a safety risk before starting play. They should be reported to the referee or a trainer and the goals or field should not be used if the condition cannot be corrected. All risks and corrective measures taken and/or that need to be taken for PSA fields must be reported to PSA on a “***Goal/Field Safety Report***” form which is in the first aid kit box.

## **PLAYER EQUIPMENT**

Players bring both required and option equipment onto the field; control of this equipment is necessary to reduce the risk of injury.

***The following PSA Equipment Safety RULES shall apply at all times:***

- ***All players participating in practices or games must wear properly-sized shin guards; ankle guards are also recommended.***
- ***Soccer shoes may not have metal cleats, nor a cleat at the very front tip of the shoe.***
- ***Laces must be properly tied at all times. Loose shoelaces shall be tied as soon as possible. Rubber***

shoelace covers are recommended. Shoelaces must never be tied around the ankles. Routinely recommend double knotting during all practices and games.

- Safety/athletic glasses are strongly recommended for those players who wear eyeglasses. They are available from local eye doctors.
- No jewelry of any kind (such as watches, bracelets, earrings, necklaces or rings) may be worn during any game or practice.
- Headgear and mouth guards, for added protection against head and mouth injuries, are available from local sports retailers
- Hair accessories may consist of only elastic/fabric and may not contain any hard material.

## **REPORTING INJURIES**

Any injury which involves a PSA location, or any player, coach, trainer, or visitor at a game or practice session, home or away, which results in unconsciousness, an inability to continue play, or that may require medical treatment, must be reported by the coach or trainer to PSA on a PSA "INJURY REPORT FORM," ( found in the first aid boxes) as soon as practicable.

The coach and trainers must have copies of all of players' medical release forms at each practice and game. Be prepared to send that form to the hospital with an injured player and one of the designated coaches or trainers.

## **DOG LEASH RULE**

There have been increasing incidents of dogs jumping onto the soccer field during a game. This is a safety issue. PSA strongly urges our families to leave their pets at home during soccer games. Referees have been advised not to begin a game with a dog present, until the dog and owner have stepped back ***at least 10 feet from the sidelines. Dogs must be leashed at all times during soccer practice and games.***

Coaches are to advise their visiting teams of this rule. Dogs are not allowed within the fenced area surrounding the PHS turf field.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Methods of anchoring goals at PSA home field locations<sup>1</sup>:**

- A. **Hilltop Field, Smoyer Park and Greenway Meadows Park :**  
All permanently anchored goals shall be anchored with appropriate soccer goal-specific anchors on both the left and right-side ground supports and anchored, at an angle, closer to the rear area of the goal, where the ground bar/shoe<sup>2</sup>, back stay and rear ground bar/shoe meet.
  
- B. **Washington Road:** Princeton University allows PSA to use these fields but forbids the use of anchor bolts. Therefore, the goals at Washington Road shall be counterweighted with 50-pounds of sand contained in plastic protective boxes, with those boxes tethered to the both ground supports, at the rear area of the goal, where the ground bar/shoe, back stay and rear ground bar/shoe meet.
  
- C. **Community Park:** The preferred method of anchoring House League goals is with appropriate soccer goal-specific anchors, or with J-hooks<sup>3</sup>, using the holes closer to the rear of the goal in the left and right-side ground bar/shoe.

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<sup>1</sup> Replacement anchors, augers, J-hooks and counterweight material will be kept by PSA for use as necessary.

<sup>2</sup> The horizontal, ground-based, side supports are called “bars,” if round, and “shoes,” if flat.

<sup>3</sup> If soil conditions are too firm and J-hooks are to be used, they are to be anchored at an angle through the anchoring holes.

