

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION



OF SPORTS OFFICIALS

PRESS RELEASE

FIRST CONCUSSION TRAINING JUST FOR SPORTS OFFICIALS DEVELOPED BY CDC AND NASO

RACINE, Wis. — The National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) is proud to announce the launch of HEADS UP to Sports Officials, a free online concussion training from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Recognizing the need for focused, industry-specific content to promote concussion safety, the CDC approached NASO about developing a training on concussion safety, specifically for sports officials.

As most sports officials know, concussions are a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce or twist inside the skull, which can stretch and damage brain cells. And concussions are all too common in athletics. In fact, sport- and recreation-related activities are a leading cause of emergency department visits for traumatic brain injuries among young people.

NASO President Barry Mano is confident that the training “will be a game-changer” when it comes to improving safety “for all those who are part of the in-game athletic experience.”

Learning about concussion is critical as athletes who are allowed to continue playing with a concussion, or who are returned to play too soon after sustaining a concussion, are at higher risk for repeated brain injuries and poorer overall health outcomes. Luckily, sports officials can play an important role in determining when to get athletes out of the game.

Providing accurate, relevant, and up-to-date education for sports officials is one of NASO’s chief concerns, and NASO/Referee Chief Operating Officer and Executive Editor Bill Topp and NASO/Referee Chief Business Development Officer Ken Koester were happy to step to the plate when called. “We are excited that this training is tailored for sports officials and aimed at our specific duties related to concussions,” Topp said. Topp and Koester provided guidance and critical sports official perspectives to CDC to make sure the training was created with sports officials’ needs in mind.”

This type of training is good for officials in all sports at all levels and the content will make for great

discussion at officiating clinics and meetings,” said Koester.

The free training, which is now available on the [CDC TRAIN platform](#), consists of three lessons and can be completed in under an hour.

The first lesson covers concussion basics, including how concussions can occur, examples of concussion signs (things a sports official might be able to observe in an athlete) and symptoms (things an athlete experiencing a concussion might feel internally). Lesson one also covers indicators of more severe brain injuries and provides advice on how sports officials can use their unique skills to support concussion safety.

Lesson two explores best practices for player removal and guidance on documentation, and how to communicate with parents and coaches about concussion safety.

The third lesson covers a sports official’s role in concussion prevention and safety. It emphasizes the importance of using correct concussion terminology and avoiding phrases like “bell ringer” or “dings” and promoting a culture of concussion safety by enforcing fair play and good sporting behavior for all athletes.

“NASO is proud to have worked with CDC to create this first of its kind officiating-specific online training on concussion.” Mano said. “We officials have a role to play in concussion safety and now we have a tool with practical advice to help us recognize the signs and symptoms of concussions and to take action when needed.”

NASO and *Referee Magazine* strongly encourage all sports officials to take the HEADS UP! to Sports Officials training and share it with their networks. This valuable educational resource can be used by individuals and officiating crews, local association meetings, and officiating camps and clinics. Sports officials who successfully complete the training and pass the post-test will be awarded a certificate of completion.

Visit CDC TRAIN to take the free training today!

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