



Memo

To: Under-11 and Under-13 Age Coaches

From: SYSI Office

Date: December 2, 2021

Re: **Player Safety in SYSI Leagues**

Hello Coaches,

For the past month, teams have been playing or are about to begin playing their scheduled portion of boarded games at the Saskatoon Kinsmen Henk Ruys Soccer Centre. SYSI wishes to remind all coaches to educate their players in creating physically safe environments in all formats of play in our league, including safety around the boards. The referee association is working diligently with all referees through mentorship efforts to curtail dangerous and reckless play, however this is a joint effort; injuries can be prevented by having both players and referees educated. Coaches are to ensure their team is playing the game with respect and fairness towards one another and are to educate their players around mitigating risks of endangering player safety.

A few items/principles of play coaches can talk to players about are:

- Not allowing physical play to dominate – timing of challenges to win the ball is important to avoid injury and fouls. Teaching players the Four S's of defending is a great start to mitigating reckless fouls. These are:
 1. **Shut down** – pressure
 2. **Slow down** – a few yards before reaching an opposing player, forces the attacking player to have to make a decision.
 3. **Sit down** – body positioning while defending. Knees should be bent, body in between the attacking player and the goal.
 4. **Show down** – look for a physical cue such as the attacker making a move to them put in a properly timed challenge.
- Play around the boards – referees have been instructed to call any physical/dangerous play around the boards which could result in players being cautioned or expelled from a game. A good rule of thumb would be to advise your players that if it looks like the opposing team will get to a ball by the boards first, to back off and apply closing pressure or “jockeying” until a suitable challenge can be made for the ball.

The last thing anyone wants is for injuries to occur, so please do your part and educate the player's around safe play. Keep the environment fun and injury free, good luck to all in the rest of the season!

Thank you,
Saskatoon Youth Soccer Inc.