

## Concussions: What Must Be Done And Why

The Wisconsin Legislature passed a law that went into effect on April 17, 2012 regarding concussions in youth athletic activities and defines a youth athletic activity "as an organized athletic activity in which the participants, a majority of whom are under 19 years of age, are engaged in an athletic game or competition against another team, club, or entity, or in practice or preparation for an organized athletic game or competition against another team, club, or entity." Youth athletic activity" does not include a college or university activity or an activity that is incidental to a nonathletic program."

Under the Law, everyone who is participating in Lake Shore Region Pony Club events where they are handling horses must be trained and participants must sign a statement that they were trained. If those participants are under the age of 19, a parent or guardian must also sign a statement that states they were trained.

The law requires immediate removal of an individual from a youth athletic activity if symptoms indicate a possible concussion has been sustained. An individual, who has been removed from a youth athletic activity because of a determined or suspected concussion or head injury, may not participate again until he or she is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance from the health care provider to return to the activity.

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) was instrumental in getting this law enacted. Because of their involvement, the law states the Department of Public Instruction in consultation with the WIAA shall develop guidelines and other materials for the purpose of educating athletic coaches and pupil athletes and their parents or guardians about the nature and risk of concussion and head injury in youth athletic activities. The WIAA has developed several items for the purpose of educating everyone on concussions and head injuries and their web site has all of these materials, including videos.

In addition to the concussion information provided by LSR and USPC we encourage everyone to visit the WIAA web site, [www.wiaawi.org](http://www.wiaawi.org), to view extensive educational materials on concussions and head injuries in youth athletic activities. Also, more information is available from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The web site is [www.cdc.gov/concussions](http://www.cdc.gov/concussions).

The law also requires this training be done at the beginning of "each" season. So no matter who was trained this season, anyone participating, coaching and all parents, must be trained again next season and every season hereafter.