



To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
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Subject: **Head Injuries**

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USSF guidance for referees at all levels has always emphasized the importance of responding appropriately to serious player injuries. National Referee clinics in the past have dealt with this matter in no uncertain terms. A specific directive was issued this year in advance of the 2009 MLS season, and entry level USSF referee training materials have reminded all officials that the seriousness of an injury is more liberally defined for youth players.

In the DC United - LA Galaxy game (March 22), two players collided while attempting to jump for the ball. As a result, both suffered head injuries, with bleeding, that required stitches or staples to close the wounds.

Play should have been stopped immediately. Whenever a player's head is injured -- regardless of whether the collision was with an opponent, a teammate, or an object on the field such as a goal post -- the safety of that player is of prime concern. There is no higher priority.

Instructors, assessors, match inspectors, and others involved with referee training and administration must take every opportunity to remind referees of this requirement, if such a reminder is needed.