

National Sports Concussion Coalition

NEWS RELEASE

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NATION'S YOUTH SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS AND HEALTH LEADERS UNITE TO LAUNCH SPORTS CONCUSSION PARTNERSHIP

National Sports Concussion Coalition to identify shared approaches to enhancing safer youth play

WASHINGTON, DC (October 7, 2013) – A number of the nation's most prominent youth sports organizations announced today that they will be partnering with concussion specialists, sports medicine professionals and leaders at other levels of sports to create an unprecedented coalition to prevent and manage concussions among young athletes.

The National Sports Concussion Coalition expects to be the most comprehensive alliance of its kind, with science and medical leaders in the fields of concussions, brain injury and sports medicine working directly with a cross-section of organizations and governing bodies that represent millions of athletes across major organized sports in the United States.

The coalition, which started discussions earlier this year and held a planning session in September, will look to enhance participation in sports in the United States by providing a safer playing environment. The partnership will complement the safety initiatives of the individual organizations by sharing data and identifying best safety practices that can assist in coaching, playing and officiating across sports.

The founding youth sports and medical members of the coalition include the [National Council of Youth Sports \(NCYS\)](#), [Pop Warner Little Scholars](#), [Sports Concussion Institute \(SCI\)](#), [US Lacrosse](#), [US Youth Soccer](#), [USA Hockey](#), [American College of Sports Medicine \(ACSM\)](#), [Amateur Softball Association/USA Softball](#), [USA Basketball](#), [USA Football](#) and the [Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention](#). Coalition partners at the professional, college and foundation levels include the [NCAA](#), [NFL](#), [NFLPA](#) and [National Football Foundation](#).

"Sports have the power to change the lives of millions of young people in this country by encouraging a physically active lifestyle and by teaching lifelong lessons. We want to make sure no child loses that opportunity due to fear of injury," said Jon Butler, executive director of **Pop Warner Little Scholars**. "By coming together in this very important fight against concussions we believe our collective efforts will transcend our individual sports and benefit everyone."

"This collection of organizations is interested in the safety and wellbeing of our young people," said Sally Johnson, **NCYS** executive director. "We will lead the way by sharing best practices among our organizations and providing parents, coaches, trainers, officials and athletes with the latest evidence-based facts and information about concussions, general health, and player safety."

"From the perspective of health and science professionals committed to the study of neuroscience, we're excited about working with a serious and respected group of professionals who can apply evidence-based approaches to directly benefit millions of young athletes across the country each day," said Tony Strickland, Ph.D, CEO of the **Sports Concussion Institute** and an Associate Clinical Professor of Neurology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

"US Youth Soccer views sport as a way to build confidence in our youth and provide lessons that will assist them throughout their lives on and off the field," said Jim Cosgrove, executive director of **US**

Youth Soccer. “We hope to play a valuable role on the team of organizations represented in the Sports Concussion Coalition as we collectively hope to leave a positive imprint on sport.”

“Enhancing player safety in lacrosse has been a focus of US Lacrosse since our 1998 inception as the sport’s national governing body,” said Steve Stenersen, CEO of **US Lacrosse**. “We’re pleased to partner with amateur sport leaders and sports medicine experts in our mutual pursuit of a safer playing environment through the continued study of head injuries and the appropriate employment of interventions to reduce their impact on athletes of all ages.”

"Providing the safest possible environment has always been at the forefront of our efforts at USA Hockey," said Dave Ogrea, executive director of **USA Hockey**. "We look forward to being part of this new coalition to not only share what has worked for us, but also contribute to the discussion as to how we can jointly help influence the best possible experience for everyone involved in sport."

“Our No. 1 priority is the health and safety of our young athletes,” **USA Football** Executive Director Scott Hallenbeck said. “Awareness of player safety concerns has graduated to action, which is happening in innovative and exciting education-based ways. We will continue to advance this important work together as partners in sport.”

“In my clinical practice and as a team physician, I see first-hand the difference that evidence-based best practices can make in preventing sports-related concussion,” said William Dexter, M.D., president of the **American College of Sports Medicine** and Director of Sports Medicine at Maine Medical Center. “The National Sports Concussion Coalition will help millions of youth athletes participate more safely — a goal that brings together the diverse organizations that make up the coalition.”

"The NCAA is committed to broad concussion education outreach, and to research that will identify objective biomarkers and sound management guidelines. We are excited about our partnership in this important alliance," said Brian Hainline, M.D., chief medical officer of the **NCAA**.

“As the union that represents professional football players, we have worked extremely hard to ensure our members benefit from the safest work environment possible,” said **NFLPA** executive director DeMaurice Smith. “This coalition brings together the right partners to help deliver an equal level of protection for athletes at all levels of sports.”

“We are pleased to be a part of the National Sports Concussions Coalition,” said Jeff Miller, NFL Senior Vice President of Health & Safety Policy. “Sports safety continues to be a priority for the **NFL**, and we are committed to creating a better, safer experience for athletes at all levels of the game, no matter what sport they choose.”

