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THE ISSUE OF CONCUSSIONS IN SOCCER

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Concussions, like torn anterior cruciate ligaments (ACL), have long been a problem in the sporting world, specifically contact sports like soccer and football. However, concussions, unlike torn ACL's, have consistently flown under the radar of coaches, parents, players and athletic trainers due to their "stealth" nature. This is because a concussion, unlike a broken bone or a torn ACL, is difficult to detect due to its varying physical signs and symptoms. Only recently, in the past ten years to be precise, has the issue of concussions in sports come to garner public attention. This attention in large part is due to the premature retirement of NFL superstars Steve Young and Troy Aikman in the late 1990's who as a result of repetitive concussions were forced to retire from the game they loved. As a result of this increased attention, research activity and public debate regarding concussions in sports have grown to a level never seen before. Ultimately these events in conjunction with personal experiences led a group of ex-players and concerned parents to create an informational website called www.soccerheadinjuries.org in early 2006.

Over the past ten years the issue of concussions in sports has come to be a pressing issue for parents, players, coaches, doctors, trainers and administrators alike. In fact more research has been conducted on concussions in the past ten years than the previous fifty. To put the problem of concussions in perspective, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) roughly 90% of all concussions in sports go unreported. That means that only 10% of all concussions are being reported!

In a nutshell, it all comes down to education. Soccerheadinjuries.org, is a national not for profit website that was formed by concerned soccer parents and former players who understand the dangers of concussions in one way or another. In the midst of this boom of information on concussions in the newspapers, medical journals, and on the television we felt that clarity in terms of information needed to be provided to the public for them to make informed decisions. Soccerheadinjuries.org is a website dedicated to providing third party information on head injuries in soccer. The mission of the organization is to educate and provide information to players, parents, coaches and administrators about a rising concern in the sport of soccer head injuries.

In closing, the mission of Soccerheadinjuries.org is to ensure that parents, coaches, administrators and players have a central place on the web to find third party research and objective information from experts around the world on this burgeoning problem. It is our belief that through education will parents, coaches, players and administrators be better prepared to address this growing problem.

If you would like to get involved please join us in our campaign to educate:

- **Heads Up Across America** educational campaign; which is currently in the process of partnering with state and national soccer organizations in an effort to get all soccer coaches, parents and administrators to take the “Coaches Quiz” on head injuries in soccer at <http://www.soccerheadinjuries.org/campaigns.asp>.

In addition please let us know if this website is useful to you. Send us your comments, suggestions and personal stories.

About the author:

Patrick Fisher is a former Major League Soccer player as well as the former captain of the men’s soccer team at UC-Berkeley. After suffering six known concussions, one almost costing him his life during his sophomore year at UC-Berkeley Patrick became passionate about the issue of concussions in soccer and has made it his mission to help prevent and educate. Patrick was a former employee of Full90 Sports, Inc. the maker of soccer head protection devices, but now works for a small private equity firm in San Diego. He truly believes in the cause of education and that is why he helped start soccerheadinjuries.org in an effort to make sure that all the information about head injuries in soccer is available to the public. You can reach Patrick at:

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