

ALERT – Safer Use of Portable Soccer Goals

Accessing Information and Resources - Just one of the benefits of Membership with the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association Inc.

July 11, 2012

Due to their weight (almost 500 pounds) and their tendency for tipping over, portable soccer goals pose a serious hazard for all children. Soccer goals can tip over from a number of causes including strong gusts of wind or children climbing on them. There are even instances of soccer goals tipping over spontaneously



due to improper design of weight distribution. The best way to keep soccer goals from tipping is to anchor them properly to the ground using stakes or weights, but these are absent most of the time. Many movable soccer goals currently in use are unsafe because they are unanchored or not properly anchored or counter-balanced. These movable soccer goals pose an unnecessary risk of tip over to children who climb on goals (or nets) or hang from the crossbar. There have been multiple

deaths (not just in Canada) but in various parts of the world attributed to swinging on the cross-bar and the frame falling on a child causing injury and/or in some cases death.

MOST RECENT FATALITY:

Yukon officials try to make soccer fields safer: 5-year-old Watson Lake girl is not the first fatality from tipped soccer nets – <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/story/2012/07/06/north-yukon-soccer-death.html>

Yukon News – <http://www.yukon-news.com/news/29245/>

OTHER RELATED INFORMATION:

Risk of Unanchored Soccer Nets – The City of Charlottetown is now in the process of anchoring all its under 12 soccer nets following a complaint from a parent <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/story/2011/07/12/pei-soccer-net-anchor-safety-584.html?ref=rss>

FIFA Guidelines – *"Never leave a goal unsecured. Portable goals which are left unsecured can tip over injuring players, in particular children and cause serious neck injuries or even a fatality. These injuries only occur during unsupervised play by children climbing on unsecured goals."*(FIFA)
http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/federation/81/42/36/laws_of_the_game_en.pdf

ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada – Smart Soccer Guide

<http://www.thinkfirst.ca/downloads/resources/ThinkFirst-SmartSoccer.pdf>

US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) – Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/soccer.pdf> and subsequently updated to
<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/5118.pdf>

ASTM Standard for Movable Soccer Goals ASTM F1938-38 (2009)

<http://www.astm.org/Standards/F1938.htm>

ASTM F2673-08 Standard Safety Specification for Special Tip-Resistant Movable Soccer Goals

<http://www.astm.org/Standards/F2673.htm>

Product Safety Australian – Anchor, Check, Respect: The game plan for moveable soccer goal safety
<http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/tag/soccergoals>

Anchored for Safety – goal warning labels
http://www.anchoredforsafety.org/coaches_clubs_warning_labels.html

Note: The Canadian Soccer Association and their member organizations all typically advocate for portable nets to be anchored. This includes recommending to owners of the field (typically the municipality) that these structures be anchored accordingly. By doing so, the potential for the problem transfers to the owner – and their lack of care and control to a known death and/or injury hazard will be significant in the event of an incident/accident.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION:

ORFA members are encouraged to review their current operational practices to secure or counterweight portable and permanent soccer goals. Where there are known hazards, post warning labels that are clearly visible advising users of these risks. Remove nets when goals are not in use and fully disassemble for seasonal storage. Another key issue with soccer goal injury prevention is maintenance. Ensure that staff are properly trained to conduct routine inspections of all structures and areas of the sports field; this is especially important to do before any scheduled soccer activities. Too many times maintenance staff will remove anchors from soccer goals in order to move them so they can cut grass around the goal and then never replace the anchors. Make sure to instruct maintenance staff to replace soccer goal anchors after removing them. Movable soccer goals should only be used on level/flat playing fields.

The [Ontario Recreation Facilities Association Inc.](#) (ORFA) was incorporated in 1947 as a provincially-recognized, not-for-profit, volunteer driven recreation organization to be the leader in the recreation facility profession. The mission of ORFA is to provide leadership in the development and delivery of innovative training and education programs, value-added services, and quality products for the benefit of the recreation facility profession. The ORFA serves as the National Head Office of the Canadian Recreation Facilities Council.

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