

## **JOE KNOWS AYSO Winter 2004**

AYSO frequently receives questions regarding rules, regulations, policies, interpretation of FIFA Law and AYSO modifications. In my position as National Referee Administrator, I am often asked to respond. The following are some of the interesting questions I recently received. If you have questions, please contact me, Joe Eldridge, at (888) 686-2976 or by e-mail at [joeeldridge@ayso.org](mailto:joeeldridge@ayso.org).

### **Question from Wendy:**

Dear Joe:

I am the Safety Director for my region. This has more to do with insurance, rather than anything else. We have a player who must wear a hearing aid box on his waist. It hooks to his cranium by wires. He did not list this as a medical condition on his registration form. We want him to play, of course, but we also don't want other players falling on this box and then on him. It's not just a question of his personal risk. We can have him give us a medical release form, but that still doesn't address any danger to other players. It's a hard device.

Help. What's the official policy on such devices? Everyone's practicing and playing everyday, so the quicker the response, the better!

### **Answer:**

Hi Wendy,

In our current edition of Guidance for Referees and Coaches, we have indicated that things like medical alert bracelets, mouthguards, and knee braces are permitted and under Hearing Aids it specifies that "Players who normally must wear Hearing Aids are also to be allowed to wear them during a game". The player may participate while wearing the device. I suggest it be padded sufficiently well to protect everyone who may come in contact with it. The wires leading to his cranium should be secured so that they are not exposed and do not get entangled or accidentally caught.

### **Question from Brook:**

Joe, are players allowed to wear mouthguards? My son has a few thousand dollars worth of braces that I would like to protect.

### **Answer,**

Hi Brook,

As a parent, I've been there and done that so I know exactly what you concern is. Rest assured AYSO does not prohibit the use of mouthguards. Parents are encouraged to consult their child's dentist or orthodontist to determine what, if any, mouthguard is appropriate for their child. Children should not be prevented from participating in practice or games because they are using or not using an athletic mouthguard. Keep smiling.

**Question from Tom:**

Joe, what is the AYSO policy on players wearing Insulin Pumps? My daughter has juvenile diabetes and was told by a referee that she would have to take it off to be able to play.

**Answer:**

Hi Tom,

A referee or coach should not be asking a player to remove an insulin pump in order to practice or play. This is the parent's decision to make in advance, in consultation with a competent physician. Players may play while wearing an insulin pump. The referees may ask that the device be padded if needed for the safety of the girl and of other players.

We recommend that the coaches and referees are made aware of the player's conditions in order to be alert and aware. Of course, the player's parents should ensure someone is present at all practices and games that is capable of rendering assistance in the event it is needed.

**Question from Charles:**

Joe, my daughter has a physical handicap which requires her to wear an ankle-foot orthoses (AFO) on one foot. It is a piece of pliable plastic that runs from beneath the foot, wraps around the heel and extends part way up the back of the calf. My question is would the AYSO rule prohibiting players from participating while wearing a hard cast or splint mean that my daughter could not play AYSO soccer?

**Answer:**

Thank you for your question. The AYSO rule prohibiting players from participating while wearing a hard cast or splint will not prohibit your daughter from playing. The device you describe is intended to provide support not to facilitate healing of a temporary injury and that distinction is important in the application of this rule. We do, for example, allow players to participate while wearing a knee brace to provide support or flexibility for a weak but otherwise uninjured knee joint.

Referees may require that the device be covered or padded but should not disallow participation. Our charge is to find ways to support our "Everyone Plays" philosophy and to find ways to keep children playing, not to shut them out.

I hope you and your daughter continue to enjoy the AYSO experience for many years to come.