

THE ISSUE: GOAL SAFETY

A Chicago area 6-year-old is killed during a scheduled practice by a falling goal...

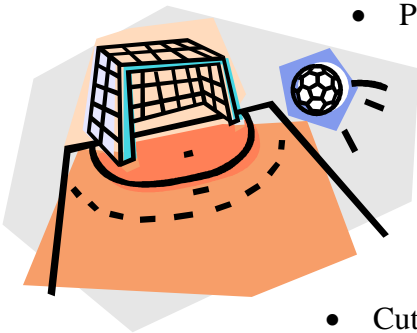
A New York goalie dives to make a save. The ball hits the side of the post and the homemade goal collapses. The goalie suffers serious head injuries...

A 5-year-old is playing in a sandbox while her brother is playing soccer. High winds topple the goal, which falls on the little girl, breaks her femur and injures the growth plate area...

A ten-year-old boy is instructed by his coach to move an extremely heavy homemade soccer goal. The goal tips over and lands on the boy's neck. He sustains a fracture to his neck and is paralyzed. He is now a quadriplegic and is dependant on a respirator to breathe. This is the largest claim paid for a soccer-related claim by Bollinger Insurance in the period from 1994 to 2004.

Goal injuries include:

- Goals falling onto people who are moving the goals from one location to another.
- People falling from goals while climbing or hanging from goals or nets.
- Goals falling over on people who are pulling down on or climbing on crossbars.
- Injuries or fatalities occurring as a result of running into goal posts.
- Goals falling over as a result of high winds or wind gusts.
- Cuts/abrasions resulting from sharp edges or jagged metal or wood pieces protruding from goal posts.



REDUCE THE THREAT AND PROTECT YOUR PLAYERS!

At a minimum you should use the following as a basis for your safety guidelines concerning soccer goals...

- **NEVER** allow anyone to play or climb on the net or goal framework.
- Place safety warning labels on the goal posts and crossbar.
- Always use extreme caution when moving goals. Portable soccer goals should be moved by **adults** who are authorized and trained to do so. Allow for adequate manpower to move goals of varied sizes.
- Communicate with all of your teams and leagues, and instruct players (and spectators) of the potential dangers associated with moving or playing on portable goals.
- Physical guidelines for goal posts should cover the following, whether permanent or portable....

- Design, construction and dimensions...make sure that the goals conform to the standards set by FIFA
- For portable goals, your guidelines should specify how to anchor, secure or place counterweights on the goals to prevent tipping.
- Portable goals should be anchored at all times, not just when the teams are on the field.
- Always remove nets when games or practices are not in session.
- Check the structural integrity and proper connecting hardware before every use.
- Use portable goals on level surfaces to prevent additional tipping hazards.
- When goals are not in use, padlock them together face-to-face or chain them to a fixed structure such as a permanent fence.
- At the end of the season, fully disassemble your goals and store them in a secure storage area.

EDUCATE, EDUCATE, EDUCATE!

- ✓ Post signs or hand out flyers at registration on soccer goal safety.
- ✓ Include safety information in membership packets.
- ✓ Put soccer goal warning signs on every portable goal used by your organization.
- ✓ Add a safety information section to your club website or team website.
- ✓ Establish a safety committee to oversee goals and other potential hazards.



Consider padding! Padding will affect the way a ball reacts when it hits the goal, but consider it as a safety addition to goals – especially for recreational or younger teams. In two separate, serious claims (one in 1998 and one in 2000) players were injured by running into goal posts during a game. In both cases, the legal complaint stated that their injuries would have been greatly minimized by padding.

REDUCE YOUR RISK BY SMART MANAGEMENT

- If possible, do not own goal posts on public property.
- Do not manufacture or design goal posts.
- Buy goals from a manufacturer of goals who has Product Liability
- Perform periodic surveys to determine who owns goals.

LEARN MORE:

Websites with goal safety information include the Consumer Product Safety Commission www.cpsc.gov , National Federation of State High School Associations, www.nfhs.org, the National Collegiate Athletic Assn. www.ncass.org and, of course, www.bollingersoccer.com