

Does Your Child Play Soccer? Make Sure You Are Aware of the Hidden Injury Risks

by Carmen Dellutri

Soccer is a popular sport for children of all ages. While it promotes exercise, teamwork, and good sportsmanship, parents should be aware that the primary equipment needed to play — soccer goals — can also pose serious injury risks.

According to the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) (CPSC), there are between 325,000 and 600,000 soccer goals in the United States. However, many pose a danger because they are unanchored or incorrectly counterbalanced.

While soccer goals frequently weigh hundreds of pounds, they can tip over in a strong gust of wind or when minimal force is applied. There have been at least 34 fatalities and 51 major injuries nationwide from 1979 to 2008. In Florida, 18-year-old Corey Hawk was crushed to death several years ago when he jumped up to fix a net. Despite the manufacturer's warning label, the goal was unanchored.

While several states have adopted laws requiring soccer goals to be anchored, Florida has not yet taken any action. In fact, a [WTSP.com](#) investigation found that many soccer goals in the communities surrounding the field where Hawk died remain unsecured.

While the dangers should not scare parents and children away from the sport, there are several important safety precautions that coaches, parents and league organizers should take to prevent injuries. The CPSC recommends the following:

- Securely anchor or counterweight movable soccer goals at ALL times.
- Anchor or chain one goal to another, to itself in a folded down position, or to nearby fence posts, dugouts, or any other similar sturdy fixture when not in use. If this is not practical, store movable soccer goals in a place where children cannot have access to them.
- Remove nets when goals are not in use.
- Check for structural integrity and proper connecting hardware before every use. Replace damaged or missing parts or fasteners immediately.
- NEVER allow anyone to climb on the net or goal framework.
- Fully disassemble goals for seasonal storage.
- Movable soccer goals should only be moved by authorized and trained personnel.
- Always instruct players on the safe handling of and potential dangers associated with movable soccer goals.
- Movable soccer goals should only be used on LEVEL (flat) fields.