



## NORFOLK UNITED SOCCER CLUB

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August 17, 2007

Dear Norfolk United Soccer Club Members,

The following message is one which was sent all soccer clubs which are members of the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (state-governing soccer association). On behalf of the VYSA President, the NUSC Board of Directors, Officers, and Staff would kindly request that all coaches and parents read this important message and please assist us in keeping all children from climbing goals or other potentially dangerous areas at all practice sites and at the Lake Taylor School Campus where matches are played. For Advanced and Select players, keep in mind the same guidelines when away matches are played. Please be assured that the NUSC Staff and Volunteers check the fields regularly for potentially dangerous situations; however, the club welcomes any volunteers or suggestions from the club membership. Thank you for your time in reading this message and assisting us with the safety of the children.

Melody Bias, Club Administrator  
Norfolk United Soccer Club

To: All Club Officials, Coaches, Managers, and Parents

From: Denise Edwards, VYSA President

I received the e-mail below as VYSA President from a parent this week. In the spring, 10 year-old Hayden Barnes Ellias was killed during a scrimmage game by a goal falling on him. Goals are always to be anchored to the ground. Children are not to hang or play on the goals. The season is beginning, be vigilant in the area of goals safety. This child was lucky. Do not let this be your child.

Good morning,

Our eight-year-old-son son, Drew, was injured Wednesday evening at Hellwig Park in Prince William County when an unsecured portable soccer goal tipped and fell on his head. Thankfully, the goal hit his head, not his neck. As it fell, a sharp piece of metal sliced his head, just above his left eye. His eye is fine and he only needed minor plastic surgery to close the wound. A CT scan and x-rays revealed no internal bleeding or fractures. We feel very lucky.

As I watched (in what seemed like slow-motion) the goal tip over on my child, I was reminded of the ten-year-old goalkeeper Hayden Barnes Ellias who died after the portable goal collapsed on him at the Millbrook High School field in Winchester, Virginia, this past spring. As we traveled to the hospital and spent hours in the ER, I could not stop thinking about the little Hayden Barnes and his family.

I don't want this to happen again and so, I am asking your help.

We are just about to begin a new season. Perhaps it's not practical for all the goals in Prince William County to be secured before this season starts, but we can take measures to prevent further injuries and fatalities in Prince William County and in our club.

I respectfully request that NVSC please Distribute an email to the parents of every player registered, warning them of the dangers of unsecured soccer goals. Distribute information to all coaches asking them to: Warn their players of the dangers and forbid them from climbing on goals Check the stability of goals on their fields at each game and practice I respectfully ask the Prince William Park Authority to establish a program to keep goals securely anchored. Re-anchor goals after moving them for mowing or storage. This short-term solution is easy and inexpensive and can help stop completely preventable injuries and deaths. In the long-term, the ultimate answer is to replace old goals with new models that use lighter materials and tip-resistant design. More information on the subject can be found at the 'Anchored for Safety' website:

<http://www.anchoredforsafety.org/index.html>

And finally, I respectfully request that this issue be addressed by the VYSA. With over 134,000 registered players, the VYSA has the power to improve public awareness and encourage local park authorities to secure their goals. I would very much appreciate a reply from a representative of each organization to whom I am sending this email: the NVSC, the Prince William County Park Authority and the VYSA. This is a public safety issue that can be resolved one community at a time.

Very truly yours,  
Jeanine Heltzel