

Here, you'll find information on the trial to remove deliberate heading in football matches at U12 level and below together with guidance on heading in training. SVYFL have signed up to this for the 2023 / 24 season

HEADING IN MATCHES TRIAL

Leagues and competitions across England have signed up to be part of the second year of the trial to remove deliberate heading in football matches at U12 level and below from the start of the 2023/24 season.

In 2021, we introduced Heading Guidance in Training which eliminated or restricted heading at U12 level and below. We want to align matchday with training in these age groups and continue the trial the removal of deliberate heading in competitions and matches.

Reducing heading at this level can support the development of more skilful players who are able to stay on the ball when in possession, contributing to the improved technical ability of our young players.

We also want to mitigate against any potential risks that may be linked to heading the ball while research is ongoing in this area.

Throughout the 2022/23 season, we engaged with everyone involved in the trial to collect significant amounts of feedback and match play data so that we can get a comprehensive understanding of how it's working. Based upon the feedback we received, it's clear the restart protocol from within the penalty area had too great an impact on the game. Therefore, for the 2023/24 season, we will be testing the following alternative restart laws, with the change underlined to help highlight the relevant amendment:

Deliberately heading the ball is an offence punishable by an indirect free kick. This will also mean the introduction of indirect free-kicks within mini-soccer for this circumstance. The indirect free kick is taken at the point where the ball was deliberately headed, except: Where a player deliberately heads the ball within their own penalty area, the referee will stop the game and restart with an indirect free-kick to the opposition from the nearest side line of the penalty area where the offence took place.

Previously, where a player of the defending team deliberately heads the ball in their own penalty area, the indirect free kick is was taken from the penalty mark.