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RESOURCE CENTER - Sports Medicine

As part of our continuing effort to service and educate our membership, each Thursday the U.S. Soccer Communications Center will send out an informative article from one of its departments. Once a week, you will receive an article/paper/essay in your inbox that will hopefully enhance your enjoyment and knowledge of the game of soccer - on and off the field.

This past fall the U.S. Under-19 Women's National Team made history as they won the first-ever FIFA women's youth world championship. In addition to focusing on their on-field role, the team also took the opportunity to use the world stage as a platform for educating teens on the dangers of skin cancer amongst teenagers by creating a unique partnership with the Skin Cancer Society. With the "U.S. U-19s Starting XI Sun Safety Tips," the team handed out specially created literature to people they encountered on their road to the championship, helping to try and create media awareness about the importance of sun safety. As a young team, playing outdoors every day, the team spread the word through clinics, appearances at schools and interaction with the media.

SUN SAFETY TIPS

from The Skin Cancer Foundation and the U.S. U-19 Women's National Team

By the age of 18, most people have received 50%-80% of their lifetime sun exposure.

Sun Safety's Starting XI

- Avoid the sun from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (when the rays are most harmful)
- Seek the shade
- Wear protective clothing
- Wear sunglasses that block at least 99% of UV rays.
- Wear broad-brimmed hats
- Wear lots of sunscreen, with an SPF of 15 or greater
- Apply sunscreen at least a half an hour before going outdoors
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours
- Stay out of tanning salons
- Tell your friends about the importance of Sun Safety
- Remember! Almost all skin cancers are preventable, and skin cancer is curable when detected and treated early.

Skin Cancer Facts

- All skin cancers are preventable and curable when detected and treated early.
- Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in women age 25-29
- More than 90 percent of all skin cancers are caused by sun exposure.
- Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer and has more than tripled among Caucasians between 1980 and 2002
- One person dies of melanoma every hour.
- Almost one in four people who develop melanoma in the United States are under 40 years of age.

The following is an article on skin cancer prevention from one of the team's doctors, Dr. Chris Amann.

Skin Cancer Prevention

By Dr. Chris Amann

Team Physician, Under 19 Women's National Team

As a sports medicine physician, environmental exposure to heat and cold is a commonly encountered problem. Not only do the issues of metabolism, electrolyte balance, and thermoregulation come into play, but also the issues of protection from the elements. This summer, the Under-19 Women's National Team participated in many matches on their way to winning the first-ever FIFA Under-19 Women's World Championship in which sun exposure was an important issue.

It has been well documented that the risk of developing skin cancer is directly proportional to sun exposure, and the effects of sun exposure are cumulative. Armed with this knowledge, we set out to minimize the risk of long-term complications of sun exposure in our athletes.

When feasible, practices were held either earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon, avoiding the peak hours of 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to minimize sun exposure. Athletes were also given practice gear consisting of tightly woven fabric to protect against the sun. Sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 was used liberally, and we made sure that it contained agents that protected against both UVA and UVB rays.

Due to the intense workouts that the players endured, the athletes were encouraged to reapply sunscreen often, to minimize the protective loss of the sunscreen through sweating. Athletes were reminded during intense workouts after one hour that they should reapply sunscreen, especially in the hotter climates. Water breaks were encouraged, and often there were places available in the shade for the athletes to take a break. The injured players were encouraged to view practices from a shaded area to minimize sun exposure.

Many of the girls enjoy the fact that they spend so much time in the sun, because it allows them to "work on their tan." Fair-skinned individuals, such as Megan Kakadelas and Lindsay Tarpley, were reminded more frequently that they should use sunscreen and protective clothing due to the increased incidence of skin cancer in fair-skinned

individuals. Even the coaches and training staff heeded their own advice by wearing hats, sunglasses, and sunscreens. Even during overcast or cloudy days, the athletes were reminded that UV rays still penetrate the cloud layer and that it is still possible to get sunburned in cloudy weather.

Our medical staff worked hard to keep the players healthy and on the field and on the trail to the World Championship, and at the same time we were also protecting the players from potentially harmful rays. With the amount of hours that players spend outdoors training, it is important to drill these self-protecting habits into the athletes at a young age. Remember, nearly all skin cancers are preventable and curable when detected and treated early.

Questions can be directed to Hughie O'Malley, U.S. Soccer's Manager of Sports Medicine Administration. Hughie can be reached at homalley@ussoccer.org or at (312) 528 1225.