

Dear Coaches, administrators, and referees:

This article is just a reminder of the importance of goal safety and making absolutely sure that all of our youth soccer players are safe. Goals should be secure at all times. Thanks.

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DISTRIBUTION: Business Editors; Legal Editors

HEADLINE: Corboy & Demetrio and Michie Hamlett Lawry Rasmussen & Tweel File Lawsuit on Behalf of Family of Boy Killed by Unsecured Soccer Goal

DATELINE: CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va.

A lawsuit was filed today in the Circuit Court of Prince William County, Virginia on behalf of the Estate of Hayden Ellias, the 10 year-old boy who died when an unsecured soccer goal fell over and killed him. The estate is represented by attorneys Shawn S. Kasserman with the Chicago, IL law firm of Corboy & Demetrio and J. Gregory Webb and Paul R. Thomson, III with the Charlottesville, VA law firm of Michie Hamlett Lowry Rasmussen & Tweel.

On May 7, 2007, Hayden Ellias attended soccer practice for the Winchester United Under 10 boys soccer team at Millbrook High School in Frederick County, Virginia. The field where the practice took place had two moveable soccer goals at opposite ends of the field. During a scrimmage with the Winchester United Under 11 girls team, Hayden, who was the goalie, was struck on the head and neck when the portable soccer goal tipped over, killing him. He is survived by his parents, Gregory and Mary Ellias, his 12 year-old brother, Colin Ellias, and his 9 year-old sister, Alanna Ellias.

The lawsuit was filed against Porter Athletic Equipment Company, manufacturers of the goal; Howard Shockey & Sons, installers of the goal; Phil Pappas, architect; OWPR, Inc., an architectural firm; and five soccer associations, the Blue Ridge Youth Soccer Association, Inc., Virginia Youth Soccer Association, Inc., Old Dominion Soccer League, Inc., United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc., and United States Soccer Federation, Inc.

The complaint alleges that each defendant knew or should have known of the dangers and hazards of moveable soccer goals and failed to protect Hayden from those dangers. Prior to Hayden's death, there were 84 other similar incidents where moveable soccer goals injured or killed a soccer player. The complaint seeks Ten Million Dollars (\$10,000,000.00) in compensatory damages.

According to Attorney Kasserman:

"This problem is known throughout the soccer industry and there are far too many cases like it each year. It is Hayden's parents' hope that this lawsuit will help change the way the soccer industry designs, installs, uses and inspects moveable soccer goals, and finally, give our children's safety the priority it deserves."

Attorney Webb added:

"This is a tragic example of the danger facing hundreds of thousands of our children who play organized soccer each year throughout the United States. The goal that crushed Hayden is extremely top heavy and is easily tipped forward. The only feature designed to keep the goal from tipping forward are ground anchors, which all too often are not attached to the goals and not re-installed after the goals are moved."