

Utah bill will reach to the slopes of Calif., Nev.

By Ski Racing

During its latest session, the Utah Legislature handed down a new law that will reach far beyond state borders as all U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association coaches and officials now have the legal responsibility to remove young athletes with suspected head injuries from competition and training.

The new law (Utah House Bill 204), requires coaches and officials working with under-18 athletes in all sports to adhere to its strict guidelines. Since The USSA is headquartered in Park City, Utah, all of the organization's 450 clubs across the country are also required to comply as of May 20.

"It's a legislation designed to protect youth athletics, particularly high school athletes from returning from a head injury too soon, which could lead to other ramifications down the line," said USSA medical director Kyle Wilkens. "Anything we can do to protect the kids is going to be better for them in the long run."

Concussions were a hot topic during the 2011 ski racing season. Between Olympic gold medalist Lindsey Vonn's well publicized head injury complications at the 2011 World Championships and World Cup winner Marco Sullivan's season-ending concussion at the end of December, head injuries and the protocols that dictate when athletes should return to activity took the center ring of the White Circus and has sparked concern down to the junior level.

Read the whole story