"BEST PRACTICE" Opinion:

Loose Soccer Goals

Question: Can our soccer goals sets be installed with the provided drive-in support pegs?
Answer: NO, absolutely not!

Loose soccer goal nets, are a very serious and life-threatening playground hazard. It is unfortunate that they continue to be sold by manufacturer/suppliers to unwary school boards, and parks. By design and proper use they may be considered secure and stable, when properly installed with these spike-systems. However, my experience has shown that these spikes and drive-in anchor systems are totally unreliable as a permanent solution!

Direct result: On June 15, 1992, 6 year old Mark Weese of Walleceburg, ON was tragically killed by a poorly designed and poorly maintained soccer goal net while playing in his schoolyard.

Whenever I complete an inspection of any soccer goal, my stability test is very simple. I pull on the top bar, with reasonable and expected force, and if it tips over it's an automatic fail. This test is so basic, yet I continue to see these loose soccer goals failing on a regular basis. Why? Because the peg style drive-in anchor systems provided are simply not reliable! Basically, they loosen by continual and repeated stress, or they become loose as ground-moisture loosens the soils grip. In the case of the above photographs, my inspection was completed several days after a strong rain. Even though the inspection day was clear, and the surface ground was dry, the base soil was still damp and no longer capable of restraining the (2) pegs provided by the manufacturer.

Goal suppliers will tell you that their anchor systems are reliable for "temporary use" only. And I agree. However, they are NOT to be used for more than a day-use "practice" scenario set up. My strong suggestion for regular, and/or long-term play is to secure these nets with permanent concrete-footings and bolt anchors, one in each corner (at minimum). Footings are then to be installed below frost level (min 1 meter or 3 feet depth) and bolt anchors are to be installed flush to the goal frame in an appropriate manner so as to prevent protrusions and/or further impact type injuries during play.

Please take the time to further review, the many articles of this serious issue posted within my website www.playchek.com ,or call me direct to discuss options to resolve this issue in a permanent manner. By working together, we can hopefully prevent tragedies like the one that took the life of young Mark Weese.

Regards,

Jim Sanders

Playchek Services Inc. London, ON
Phone: 519-641-5787 *Web:* www.playchek.com *Email:* playchek@rogers.com