



## **Player Removal From Play and Return to Play Concussion Policy**

What to do if a concussion is suspected.

**Remove the athlete from play.** Look for signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. *When in doubt sit them out.*

**Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:

- Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body.
- Any loss of consciousness (passed/knocked out) and if so, for how long.
- Any memory loss immediately following the injury.
- Any seizures immediately following the injury.
- Number of previous concussions (if any).

**Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the information on the possible cause as stated above.**

This fact sheet can help parents monitor the athlete for sign or symptoms that appear or get worse once the athlete is at home or returns to school.

**Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health care professional says they are symptom free and it's OK to return to play.**

After you remove an athlete with a suspected concussion from practice or play, the decision about when to return to practice or play is a medical decision. Parents will be required to provide a Doctor's note giving the athlete permission to participate in practice and games.

Remember this is about protecting the kids all athletes will abide by this policy, this is for everyone's benefit.



**Signs and Symptoms of a possible concussion can be but are not limited to the following.**

*Symptoms reported by the athlete:* Headache or “pressure” in head; Nausea or vomiting; Balance problems or dizziness; Double or blurry vision; Sensitivity to light or noise; Feeling sluggish, hazy foggy, or groggy; Concentration or memory problems; Confusion; Does not “feel right” or is “feeling down”.

*Signs observed by coaching staff:* Appears dazed or stunned (such as glassy eyes); Is confused about position or assignment; Forgets an instruction or play; Is unsure of score or opponent; Moves clumsily or poor balance; Answers questions slowly; Loses consciousness; Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes; Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall; Can’t recall events after hit or fall.

Athletes who experience one or more of the signs and symptoms listed above, or who report not “feeling right” after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

**If one or more of the following signs or symptoms are exhibited by an athlete after a blow, bump, or jolt to head and/or body Dial 911 or take immediately to the Emergency Room.**

- **One pupil larger than the other**
- **Is drowsy and cannot be awakened**
- **A headache that gets worse**
- **Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination**
- **Repeated vomiting or nausea**
- **Slurred speech**
- **Convulsions or seizures**
- **Cannot recognize people or places**
- **Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated**
- **Has unusual behavior**
- **Loses consciousness (even briefly).**

### **What is a Concussion?**

A bump, blow, or jolt to the head can cause a concussion, a type of traumatic brain injury. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth – literally causing the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull. This sudden movement of the brain causes stretching, damaging the cells and creating chemical changes in the brain. Once these changes occur, the brain is more vulnerable to further injury and sensitive to any increased stress until it fully recovers.

Unlike a broken ankle, or other injuries you can feel with your hands, or see on an x-ray, a concussion is a disruption of how the brain works. It is not a “bruise to the brain.”

**All Concussions are serious**

**Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness**

**Recognition and proper response to concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury.**



## Return to Practice and Play Policy

After an athlete has been removed from play due to a suspected concussion the athlete may return to practice and play after providing the league with a Doctors note granting permission to return to football related activities.

The following steps will be followed by the athletes coach to ensure a safe return to Football.

**Step 1:** Begin the athlete with light aerobic exercise only to increase his or her heart rate. This means about 5 to 10 minutes of walking or light jogging. Monitor the athlete for any signs or symptoms that the concussion may still be present.

**Step 2:** Continue with activities to increase an athletes heart rate with body and head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running. Again always monitor the athlete for any signs or symptoms.

**Step 3:** Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, non-contact sport specific drills (in three planes of movement). Continue to monitor athlete.

**Step 4:** Athlete may return to practice and full contact in controlled practice. Coaches still monitor progression of the athlete.

**Step 5:** Athlete may return to football competition.

Coaches during monitoring of the athlete at anytime if signs or symptoms are present they should be told to the parents or guardians so they may relay the information back to a health care provider. If at any time signs or symptoms are noticed the athlete will begin from Step 1 in the return process. The steps should not and will not be completed in just one day please allow at least 4 days to complete the steps this will give the parents and guardians time to observe the athlete at home after practice for any signs and symptoms.

Parents please monitor your child at home for any signs or symptoms and report them to his or her coach.

Following this policy will ensure the safe return to play for the athletes and help prevent further injury and future concussions.