



Concussion Policies

Concussions can occur while participating in volleyball or in any sport or recreational activity. Since the circumstances under which a concussion can be sustained are so varied, it's important for all coaches, parents, and athletes to be aware of the signs, symptoms, and what to do if a concussion occurs. Trauma may occur through direct contact to the head or face or indirectly through a deceleration or rotational injury to the head. Injuries to the brain are characterized by an altered state of consciousness. It is the altered state of consciousness that is the key thing to look for with any head injury. A concussion is a common injury, but since it cannot be detected on x-rays or CT scans, concussions have been difficult to fully investigate and understand. Fortunately, there have been many important advances in our knowledge of concussions, including how to identify, manage and recover from a concussion. Although concussions are often referred to as "mild traumatic head injuries" and often resolve uneventfully, ALL concussions have the potential for serious and long-lasting symptoms and so must be identified and treated carefully and in consultation with a physician.

Concussion Education and Awareness

Concussion in Sport All players who are suspected of having a concussion must be removed from play and seen by a physician as soon as possible. A concussion is a brain injury. It may occur with or without loss of consciousness. **How Concussions Happen** Because concussion is usually caused by rapid deceleration or rotation of the brain within the skull, it can be caused by a blow to the head or face, a fall, or a rapid change of direction of the body.

Symptoms and signs may have a delayed onset - may be worse later that day or even the next morning -, so players should continue to be observed even after the initial symptoms and signs have returned to normal. It is important for our coaches to be able to recognize a concussion. There may or may not be a loss of consciousness, there is always a temporary loss of some brain function which may result in the player being: dazed, slow to respond to questions or other stimuli, blurred vision, difficulty concentrating, dizziness, irritability, nausea, vomiting or headache. A few or all of these symptoms may occur. The coach's role is not to make a firm diagnosis, but to recognize the athlete at risk, remove him/her from sport and get the athlete assessed medically.



Initial Response to Loss of Consciousness

If there is loss of consciousness or a suspicion of a concussion without loss of consciousness, Initiate Emergency Action Plan and call an ambulance. Assume possible neck injury. Continue to monitor airway, breathing and circulation.

Concussion – Key Steps

- If a concussion occurs in practice or at a competition remove the athlete from the activity
- Do not leave the athlete alone; monitor symptoms and signs
- Do not administer medication
- Inform the coach, parent or guardian about the injury
- The athlete should be evaluated by a medical doctor as soon as possible
- The athlete must not return to practice or the regatta

For an expanded description of the steps please refer to the [McMaster Guidelines for Return to Activity and School](#).

ROWAN'S LAW

Established in January 2022, the following Rowan's Law mandates continue:

1. Establishment of Removal-From-Sport and Return-to-Sport Protocols. A sample protocol template is available at www.ontario.ca/concussions
2. Identify a designated person(s) as having specific responsibilities under the Removal/Return-to-Sport protocols.
3. Make their protocols available to designated person(s), and any athlete (and their parent if the athlete is under 18 years of age) who has been removed from training, practice or competition due to a suspected concussion.
4. Each sport organization shall create a retention policy for personal information if one does not exist.

REMOVAL FROM SPORT PROTOCOL

- Designated person(s) to immediately remove the athlete from further training, practice or competition.
- Designated person(s) to call 9-1-1 if in their opinion, doing so is necessary.



- If the athlete under 18, designated person(s) to inform parent or guardian about the removal. Designated person(s) to advise the athlete, or the parent or guardian, that the athlete is required to undergo a medical assessment (by a physician or nurse practitioner) before returning.
- Designated person(s) to provide the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18, the athlete's parent or guardian with Removal-from and Return-to-Sport protocols.
- Sport organization to make and keep a record of incidences where an athlete is removed.
- Once removed, the athlete is not permitted to return to training, practice or competition, until medically cleared to do so in accordance with the Return-to-Sport protocol.

The full Phase II Rowan's Law document can be found at [here](#)