

Important Message from the AAHA Player Safety Coordinator:

This notice is to serve as advisement to all organizations in regards to the immediate implementation of the USA Hockey Concussion Management Protocol which requires that an athlete be removed from any training, practice, or game if they exhibit any signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or are suspected of sustaining a concussion.

Common signs and symptoms an athlete may report include but are not limited to:¹

- Headache/pressure in the head
- Nausea/vomiting
- Balance problems, dizziness, blurred/double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, foggy, or groggy
- Confusion/memory problems

Common signs observed by coaches/bystanders include but are not limited to:¹

- Player loses consciousness, EVEN BRIEFLY
- Player appears stunned/dazed, moves clumsily
- Player forgets an instruction, is confused about assignment/position, or is unsure of game/score
- Player answer questions slowly
- Player demonstrates mood, behavior, or personality changes

The player should not return to physical activity until he or she has been evaluated by a qualified medical provider who has provided written clearance to return to sports.² Please note, per SafeSport, the definition of abuse includes “Ordering players to re-enter games when they show signs of injury”.³

Per the guidelines of the governing body, the USA Hockey CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT RETURN TO PLAY FORM must be used after an athlete has been removed from athletic activity due to a suspected concussion, and must be signed by their medical provider in order to return without restriction to training, practice, or competition.²

These forms are located on the AAHA website by accessing the “About Us” dropdown to “Player Forms”, and a copy is also attached to this letter. Parents are to be held responsible for printing and completing the top portion of the form, the healthcare provider is responsible for signing the middle portion of the form, and the coach is to sign the bottom of the form confirming receipt of the clearance form in order for the athlete to return to play. **The coach will then turn in these completed forms to the organization’s team manager who will scan and send collected forms on the last day of each month to the AAHA Player Safety Coordinator - kward@aahahockey.org**

If you have any questions about this policy, please reach out to Katelyn via the above listed email address at your convenience.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Katelyn Ward, MS, LAT, ATC

AAHA Player Safety Coordinator

References:

1. Brain Injury Basics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2023
https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/concussion_symptoms.html
2. Concussion Information, USA Hockey, 2023
<https://www.usahockey.com/safety-concussions>
3. Coach FAQs, U.S. Center for SafeSport, 2023
<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/coaches/>