

The Roswell Youth Football League Awareness Key to Preventing Long-term Injury

As a result of legislation like the Lystedt Law, RYFL has been proactive to develop protocols for treating concussions, as well as a program to educate athletes, parents, coaches and trainers on the symptoms and management of a sports concussion. At the core of these laws and protocols are “The Four Rs”: 1) recognize, 2) remove, 3) refer and 4) return to play only when cleared by a licensed health care professional.

1) **Recognize** the Signs A concussion is a brain injury caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head, and thus rapid movement of the brain inside the skull. Despite a higher prevalence in boy’s football, concussions can occur in any sport, and to girls as well as boys. Signs can include immediate memory disturbance, dizziness and vomiting .Note that an athlete does not have to lose consciousness to suffer a concussion. And keep in mind that a competitive young athlete might be less than forthcoming about his or her condition.

2) **Remove** the Athlete If you have any doubt about young athletes after a head injury, sit them out. And under no circumstance let them return to a game the same day of the concussion.

3) **Refer** to a Professional Don’t try and judge the severity of the injury by yourself. Have the athlete evaluated as soon as possible by a health care professional.

4) **Return** Only When Cleared Treating young athletes with a concussion is uniquely challenging because their brains are still developing. Returning to action too early can result in second-impact syndrome, which can cause severe brain injury or death. Concussed athletes should not practice or play until they've been cleared by a licensed health care professional.

RYFL Concussion Procedure and Protocol

Concussion: a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. Medically, a concussion is a complex, pathophysiological event to the brain that is induced by trauma.

CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS AND MANAGEMENT AT GAMES AND PRACTICES

Step 1:

Did a concussion occur?

Evaluate the player and note if any of the following symptoms are present: (1) Dazed look or confusion about what happened. (2) Memory difficulties. (3) Neck pain, headaches, nausea, vomiting, double vision, blurriness, ringing noise or sensitive to sounds. (4) Short attention span. Can't keep focused. (5) Slow reaction time, slurred speech, bodily movements are lagging, fatigue, and slowly answers questions or has difficulty answering questions. (6) Abnormal physical and/or mental behavior. (7) Coordination skills are behind, ex: balancing, dizziness, clumsiness, reaction time.

Step 2:

Is emergency treatment needed? This would include the following scenarios:

(1) Spine or neck injury. (2) Behavior patterns change. (3) Loss of consciousness.

Step 3:

If a possible concussion occurred, but no emergency treatment is needed, what should be done now?

Focus on these areas every 5-10 min for the next 1 - 2 hours, without returning to any activities: (1) Balance. (2) Speech. (3) Memory. (4) Attention on topics, details.

Step 4:

Players should not re-enter competition, practice, or partake in any activities for at least 24 hours. Even if there are no symptoms after 15-20 min, activity should not be taken by the player, coach, and or parent.

RYFL (BOD) board member on duty will have final say to re-enter competition to ensure concussion protocol and procedure are followed and long term safety and well-being of player is at the best interest of decision making.

It is the concussed player's head coach responsibility to ensure parental notification is completed in a timely manner, and report time of Parential notification to Borad member on duty.

Step 5:

A player diagnosed with a possible concussion may return to RYFL activities only after release from a licensed medical doctor specializing in concussion treatment and management.

Step 6: A Release Letter or Note from Physician Must be presented to League Official Prior to Return to Play

References:

Kissick MD, James and Karen M. Johnston MD, PhD. "Return to Play After Concussion." Collegiate Sports Medical Foundation. Volume 15, Number 6, November 2005. http://www.csmfoundation.org/Kissick__return_to_play_after_concussion_-_CJSM_2005.pdf. April 22, 2011.

National Federation of State High School Associations. "Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports". 2008 NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook (Third Edition). 2008 77-82. <http://www.nfhs.org>. April 21, 2011.