

**Club Policy #: POL-2016-04****Concussion Policy & Return to Play Protocol**

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## **CONCUSSION POLICY & RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

Concussions can occur while participating in any sport, including soccer. Since the circumstances under which a concussion can be sustained are so varied the following policy has been developed to assist coaches and parents to be aware of the signs, symptoms, and what to do if there is potential of a concussion.

### **Call to Action:**

Coaches and parents alike should familiarize themselves with the signs of a concussion. We ask that coaches do not attempt to diagnose a concussion but be familiar with the both the symptoms of a concussion and the potential hazards which lead to concussions (head to head collisions, collision with equipment such as goal posts etc.).

Utilize the [Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool](#) (appendix 1) to recognize the signs of a concussion.

### **Heading the Ball:**

The Club does not recommend heading below the age of 14. Coaches are asked not to teach or practice heading prior to the age of 14. As the level of play advances and the participants' skills increase, the proper heading techniques may be introduced to prepare the player for proper execution.

Proper techniques can first be learned through the use of rag, nerf, and inflatable balls, thus avoiding unnecessary, repetitive heading of a regulation soccer ball. From an overall perspective, the Club follows four main heading guidelines:

1. introduce heading at an appropriate age level,
2. teach the skill correctly,

3. never force a player to head the ball,
4. limit the number of times a child heads the ball.

### **Pitch Protocol for potential concussion:**

If you suspect a possible concussion, please ask the player to immediately refrain from play and seek medical advice in relation to a potential concussion. Any player suspected of a concussion on the soccer pitch shall not return to play until Club Administration has provided clearance to return to the pitch. See appendix 1, Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool to recognize the signs of a concussion.

### **Roles & Responsibilities:**

The safety of our players on the pitch is a community responsibility. As such we have outlined roles & responsibilities for the Coach, Club & Administration as well as the Player/Parent/Guardian.

### **Coach Responsibilities:**

- 1) Be familiar with hazards leading to a concussion and the typical signs of a concussion by reviewing the Pocket Concussion Recognition Toolkit; do not attempt to diagnose a concussion.
- 2) Immediately restrict play on the pitch if any player is suspected of a concussion; notify Club Administration via the Accident Report Form, appendix 2 (also available on the CLUB website [Coach Forms page](#))
- 3) Continue to restrict any player who is suspected of a concussion until Club Administration has granted permission to return to the pitch.

### **Player / Parent /Guardian Responsibilities:**

- 1) Support day to day safe play.
- 2) Adhere to and support Club Rules including the Concussion & Return to Play Protocol Policy
  - i. Support & respect a Coach or Soccer Club request to refrain from play until a medical note and permission for return to pitch has been granted by Club Administration.
  - ii. Obtain a medical note with clearance for play to Club Administration in relation to your own child's potential concussion.

**\*\*\*Return to Pitch permission may be granted from Club Administration only, not from a Coach. \*\*\***

- iii. Familiarize yourself with the signs of a concussion. We strongly encourage you review references included with this policy.

**CLUB Administration Responsibilities:**

- 1) Receive notification from coaches and parents that a potential concussion has occurred via Club Accident Report Form.
- 2) Contact Player/ Parent / Guardian to confirm occurrence. Confirm if return to pitch paperwork is required.
- 3) Track all concussion related, return to pitch permission occurrences.
- 4) Provide concussion related statistics to Club Board on an annual basis.

**CLUB Board:**

- 1) Maintain Club Concussion & Return to Play Protocols.
- 2) Review annual Club concussion statistics and determine if additional preventative measures are required.

**RETURN TO PLAY**

The below Return to Play information is included for your reference. A typical RTP process will be made up of 6 steps. There must be a minimum of 24 hours before each step is assessed although this could be considerably longer than 24 hours. Oversight should be provided by a medical professional. The 6 steps are as follows:

1. No activity, complete rest. Once the athlete is asymptomatic, they proceed to level two. The athlete spends, at the minimum, one day at each stage.
2. Light aerobic exercise such as walking or stationary cycling, no resistance training. Performing step two without symptoms allows the athlete to proceed to level three. If symptoms return, the athlete moves back one stage then continues.
3. Sport specific training (e.g. skating in hockey, running in football), progressive addition of resistance training at steps three or four. Performing step three without symptoms allows the athlete to proceed to level four.
4. Non-contact training drills. Performing step four without symptoms allows the athlete to proceed to level five.

5. Full contact training after medical clearance. Performing step five without symptoms allows the athlete to proceed to level six.
6. Game play.

### **References:**

<http://www.ontariosoccer.net/player/sports-medicine/concussions>

[http://www.ayso.org/For\\_Volunteers/region\\_boards/safety\\_director/safety\\_director\\_res/safety/is\\_heading\\_safe.htm#.Vqinj1JLUuM](http://www.ayso.org/For_Volunteers/region_boards/safety_director/safety_director_res/safety/is_heading_safe.htm#.Vqinj1JLUuM)

### **Additional Resources:**

The below tools are provided by the Ontario Soccer Association. For more information refer to <http://www.ontariosoccer.net/player/sports-medicine/concussions>

### **FIFA SCAT 3**

The FIFA SCAT is recognized worldwide as an excellent tool for the identification of concussions and the subsequent steps required in returning a player to full activity.

**SIRC** - [Click for Head Injury Report Form Child Scat 3](#)

**SIRC** - [Click for Head Injury Report Form Adult Scat 3](#)

<http://www.cattonline.com/>

Cattonline.com currently provides two free online concussion toolkits: the Concussion Clinical Toolkit for Medical Professionals and the Concussion Awareness Training Toolkit for Parents, Players, and Coaches.

Both websites provide up-to-date education, tools and resources to help prevent, recognize, treat and manage concussions as well as support decreasing the impact of concussion when they do occur.

<http://www.coach.ca/concussion-awareness-s16361>

[http://www.coach.ca/files/Concussion\\_Pocket.pdf](http://www.coach.ca/files/Concussion_Pocket.pdf)

### **Parachute's Active and Safe Concussion Toolkit**

<http://www.parachutecanada.org/active>

### **Ontario Concussion Portal**

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/concussions>

**Play Safe Initiative Resources**

<http://www.playsafeinitiative.ca/resource>

**FIFA 11 + Warm-up**

<http://f-marc.com/11plus/home/>