

# Concussion Protocol and Policy

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*RYA believes in the safe play of all athletes in our organization. As more information comes to light as to the dangers of concussions in youth sports, our organization must be educated in our response to these medical issues.*

## Introduction

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal function of the brain. It occurs when the brain is rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. What may appear to be only a mild jolt or blow to the head or body can result in a concussion.

The understanding of sports-related concussion by medical professionals continues to evolve. We now know that young athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of a concussion. Once considered little more than a “ding” on the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in a variety of short- or long-term changes in brain function or, in rare cases, even death.

## What is a concussion?

You’ve probably heard the terms “ding” and “bell-ringer.” These terms were previously used to refer to minor head injuries and thought to be a normal part of collision sports. Research has now shown us that there is no such thing as a minor brain injury. Any suspected concussion must be taken seriously. The athlete does not have to be hit directly in the head to injure the brain. Any force that is transmitted to the head in any matter may cause the brain to literally bounce around or twist within the skull, potentially resulting in a concussion.

## Recognition and Management

If an athlete exhibits any signs, symptoms, or behaviors that make you suspicious that he or she may have had a concussion, that athlete must be removed from all physical activity, including sports, practice, and recreation. Continuing to participate in physical activity after a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, increased risk for further injury, and even death.

**Parents and coaches are not expected to be able to “diagnose” a concussion. That is the role of an appropriate health-care professional.** However, everyone involved in athletics must be aware of the signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with a concussion. If you suspect that an athlete may have a concussion, then he or she must be immediately removed from all physical activity.

## Signs Observed by Coaching Staff

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction

- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

### Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headaches or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"

### If you believe a player has a concussion

When you suspect that a player has a concussion, follow the "Heads Up" 4-step Action Plan as recommended by the CDC.

- Remove the athlete from play and report the head official and to your RYA sports director.
- Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion.
- Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.
- Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health-care professional says he or she is symptom-free and gives the okay to return to activity.

**A "Concussion Incident Report" MUST be completed immediately. The form is located at the end of the Concussion Protocol Policy.**

## What to do in an Emergency

Although rare, there are some situations where you will need to call 911 and activate the Emergency Medical System (EMS). The following circumstances are medical emergencies:

1. Any time an athlete has a loss of consciousness of **any** duration. While loss of consciousness is not required for a concussion to occur, it may indicate more serious brain injury.

2. If an athlete exhibits any of the following:

- Decreasing level of consciousness
- Looks very drowsy or cannot be awakened
- Difficulty getting his or her attention
- Irregularity in breathing
- Severe or worsening headaches
- Persistent vomiting, or any seizures.

## Return to Play

An athlete should never be allowed to resume physical activity following a potential concussion until he or she is symptom free and given the approval to resume physical activity by an appropriate health-care professional.

**In order for an athlete to return to practice or game activity, the RYA Secretary must be presented with written medical documentation from an appropriate medical professional.**

## Required training and certification:

Effective August 5, 2015, all sport's coaches, assistant coaches, sport directors, and RYA Board members will complete the comprehensive concussion training via the NAYS.org website.

Training will be coupled with all coach's certifications and must be completed annually as part of the coaching certification process.

# Concussion Incident Report

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Name of Player: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Sport: \_\_\_\_\_ Baseball \_\_\_\_\_ Football \_\_\_\_\_ Cheer Leading \_\_\_\_\_ Basketball \_\_\_\_\_ Superkids

Head Coach: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Reported to Sports Director (Name): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Form Completed and given to RYA Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

RYA Secretary Follow up date with Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the player seen by an appropriate medical professional? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no\*

Name of Medical Professional: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Sports Activity release received from Medical Professional? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no\*

Attach Medical Professional's release form when provided to this form

Return to Sports Activity Approved by RYA Secretary \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

Date Returned: \_\_\_\_\_

RYA Secretary (Printed name): \_\_\_\_\_

RYA Secretary Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*if any "no" answers are received above; the player will not be returned to sports activity until seen and released by an appropriate medical professional. There are no exceptions to this policy.*