

STSC-26 CONCUSSION POLICY

Effective Date: November 18, 2019

Revision Date:



Head injuries in children's sports have become an increasing focus for both parents and sports officials alike. In order to try to ensure a consistent approach to dealing with head injuries, STSC has developed a protocol for coaches and parents to follow when a player suffers an injury.

- A concussion is a **brain injury**.
- All concussions are **serious**.
- Concussions can occur **without** loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in **any sport**.

Recognition and proper management of concussions when they **first occur** can help prevent further injury or even death.

STSC Policy

In order to help protect the soccer players, the St. Thomas Soccer Club has mandated that all our soccer players, parents/guardians and coaches follow the Concussion Policy.

1. A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time.
2. A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.

The Facts

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child/player reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Headaches
- “Pressure in head”
- Nausea or vomiting
- Neck pain
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision
- Amnesia
- “Don’t feel right”
- Fatigue or low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Irritability

- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Drowsiness
- Change in sleep patterns
- More emotional
- Confusion
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)
- Repeating the same question/comment

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:

- Appears dazed
- Confused about assignment
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily or displays un-coordination
- Answers questions slowly
- Any change in typical behavior or personality
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Vacant facial expression
- Forgets plays
- Can't recall events after hit
- Seizures or convulsions
- Slurred speech
- Loses consciousness
- Can't recall events prior to hit

If you think a child/player has suffered a concussion

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. Medical evaluation should be sought.

What can happen if a child/player keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athlete will often under report symptoms of injuries. And concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student athlete's safety.