

Ottawa Sport Council
Concussion Prevention and Management Policy

DEFINITIONS

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
 - a) “*Association*” – Ottawa Sport Council
 - b) “*Participants*” – Coaches, athletes, volunteers, Members, employees

POSITION STATEMENT

2. The Association takes seriously the health and well-being of all participants and is committed to ensuring the safety of those participating in sport. The Association recognizes the increased awareness of concussions and their long-term effects and believes that prevention of concussions is paramount to protecting the health and safety of participants.

PURPOSE

3. The Association enacts this Policy as a tool to help manage concussed and possible concussed participants. The Policy provides guidance in identifying common signs and symptoms of concussion, protocol to be followed in the event of a possible concussion, and return to play guidelines should a concussion be diagnosed.
4. Awareness of the signs and symptoms of concussion and knowledge of how to properly manage a concussion is critical to recovery and helping to ensure the individual is not returning to physical activities too soon, risking further complication.
5. Please keep in mind that a concussion is a clinical diagnosis that can only be made by a medical doctor. It is imperative that someone with a suspected concussion be examined by a medical doctor.

PROCEDURE

6. During all sporting events, competitions, and practices, participants will use their best efforts to:
 - a) Be aware of incidents that may cause a concussion, such as:
 - i. Falls
 - ii. Accidents
 - iii. Collisions
 - iv. Head trauma – (blow to the head, face or neck, OR a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head)
 - b) Recognize and understand the symptoms that may result from a concussion. These may appear immediately after the injury or within hours or days of the injury and may be different for everyone. Some common signs and symptoms include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Nausea
 - ii. Poor concentration
 - iii. Amnesia
 - iv. Fatigue
 - v. Sensitivity to light or noise
 - vi. Irritability
 - vii. Poor appetite
 - viii. Decreased memory
 - ix. Poor balance
 - x. Slowed reaction time
 - c) Identify injured participants or other individuals who have been involved in any of the above incidents and/or exhibit any of the above symptoms.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Association will:

- Ensure that all participants and/or parents/guardians are aware of this policy.
- Provide information to program participants and/or parents/guardians that addresses concussion prevention, identification and management.

- Provide training on the prevention, identification and management of suspected and diagnosed concussions to all employees/contractors that are directly involved with recreation programming and/or the supervision of participants.

All Association employees/contractors that are directly involved with recreation programming and/or the supervision of participants will:

- Follow appropriate procedures related to Removal from Play in cases where a concussion is suspected.
- Document all suspected concussions sustained while participating in an Ottawa Sport Council program
- Ensure that participants follow the 5 Step Return to Play protocol in cases where a concussion has been diagnosed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. Any return to play considerations must be accompanied by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner's written approval.

Participants and/or parents/guardians will:

- Notify an employee/contractor of the Association about any current or previous concussions or concerns, and ensure ongoing communication throughout the Return to Play process.

RETURN TO PLAY

7. Once the participant's immediate needs have been met, the participant's family or the participant should be directed to the following protocol, in accordance with the following guidelines established by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport:

- a) If no concussion is diagnosed: the participant may return to physical activities
- b) If a concussion is diagnosed: the participant should only return to the activity after following the steps outlined below and as directed by a physician:

STEP 1: Complete cognitive and physical rest. Immediately consult a physician. Limit school, work and tasks requiring concentration. Refrain from physical activity until symptoms are gone. Once all symptoms are gone, rest for at least another 24-48 hours and re-consult a physician, preferably one with experience managing concussion. **In order to proceed to Step 2**, medical clearance is required.

STEP 2: Light aerobic exercise to reintroduce physical activity: 10-15 minutes of low intensity activity like walking or stationary cycling. **In order to proceed to Step 3**, the concussed participant or parent/guardian if applicable must report back to his/her coach, administrator and/or supervisor that he/she is symptom free.

STEP 3: Sport-specific exercise: 15 minutes of low intensity participation. The environment should be managed so as to ensure the participant is at minimum risk of falling or colliding with other participants. The participant may also attempt basic balance drills. **In order to proceed to Step 4**, the concussed participant or parent/guardian if applicable must report back to his/her coach, administrator and/or supervisor that he/she is symptom free.

STEP 4: Activity with no body contact: non-contact practice and non-contact sport specific drills – no activity that involves head impact or other jarring motions. **In order to proceed to Step 5**, the participant must provide written documentation from a medical doctor to his/her coach, administrator and/or supervisor. The documentation must state that the individual is symptom free and able to return to full participation in physical activity.

STEP 5: Full participation in non-contact sports once cleared by a physician.

- c) Please note that each step must take a minimum of 24 hours and the length of time needed to complete each step will vary based on the severity of the concussion.
- d) The concussed participant should be monitored regularly for the return of any signs and/or symptoms of concussion. If signs and/or symptoms return, consult with the medical doctor.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE

8. This Policy requires the participant to consult with a physician throughout this process AND provide proof of medical clearance before being eligible for Steps 2 and Steps 5 noted above. The Association will comply with all directions provided by the physician which may supersede this policy.
9. If a participant is showing signs of concussion and/or has been clinically diagnosed as concussed, the Coach, Administrator and/or Supervisor of that participant **shall** prevent the participant from participation until the required medical clearance has been provided.
10. Once the participant has provided medical clearance, the coach, administrator and/or supervisor will be required to forward a copy of the medical clearance letter to the Association where it shall be attached to the participant's Incident Report for record keeping purposes.

NON-COMPLIANCE:

11. Failure to abide by any of the guidelines and/or protocols contained within this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken by the Association in accordance with its Discipline and Complaints Policy.