

REGULATION**REGULATION**

INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

Information and Required Procedures Relating to
Concussions and Head Injuries for Students
Involved in Interscholastic Athletic Activities

The Superintendent shall be responsible for distributing to school principals all guidelines, information and forms that have been approved by the Governing Board and that are intended to inform and educate District coaches, students and parents about the dangers of concussions and head injuries and the risks a student incurs if the student continues to participate in an interscholastic athletic activity after he or she sustains a concussion. (Hereafter, these guidelines, information and form(s) are collectively referred to as the “concussion information.”)

Each school year, before a student is permitted to participate in a District sponsored interscholastic activity, including practice sessions as well as games, the principal of the school the student attends shall be responsible for ensuring that the student and his or her parent/guardian: (1) are provided with a copy of the concussion information; (2) have the opportunity to ask the principal or an assistant principal any questions they may have about any aspect of the concussion information; (3) review and sign an Information and Acknowledgement Form, Exhibit JJIB-E1 (or AIA Form 15.7-C 02/11); and, (4) return the signed Information and Acknowledgement Form (or AIA Form 15.7-C 02/11) to the principal’s office, where it will be maintained.

Coaches

Each school year, school principals shall meet with the coaches at their respective schools who are involved in coaching interscholastic athletic activities to review the information and obligations set forth in A.R.S. 15-341(A)(24), District policy JJIB, this regulation, and the concussion information. The principals shall be responsible for ensuring that each athletic activity coach attends a meeting held for this purpose and that the coach’s participation in such a meeting is documented prior to the time that the coach begins any coaching assignment that school year.

Other Staff

The principals shall inform all staff members assigned to their respective schools about the information and obligations contained in A.R.S. 15-341(A)(24), Board policy JJIB, this regulation and the concussion information.

REGULATION

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Use by Non-District Groups or Organizations
of District Property or Facilities for Athletic Activities

Outside groups or organizations that desire to use property or facilities owned or operated by the District for athletic activities shall be required to execute a District form entitled: "Addendum to Rental or Facilities Use Agreement for Groups or Organizations that use District Property or Facilities for Athletic Activities." This form, which is Exhibit JJIB-EB, informs the group or organization about, and requires the group or organization to comply with, the provisions of A.R.S. §15-341(A)(24)(b). The requirements of this paragraph do not apply to teams based in another state participating in athletic events in Arizona.

7/27/11

INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS
(Mild Traumatic Brain Injuries (MTBI) / Concussions)

INFORMATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I, _____ (student), acknowledge that I have an obligation to be an active participant in my own health and that I have the direct responsibility to report to my coaches, team physicians and/or athletic trainers all prior and existing injuries and illnesses that could potentially impact my ability to practice or compete in interscholastic activities. This responsibility includes reporting (1) any prior head injury or concussion that I have suffered, (2) any new head injury or concussion that I suffer, (3) any prior concussion-related symptoms that I have experienced, and (4) any new concussion-related symptoms that I experience. I further acknowledge that my physical condition and health may be negatively impacted unless I provide to my coaches, team physicians, and/or athletic trainers accurate and complete medical information about head injuries, concussions, and/or concussion-related symptoms regardless of whether the applicable symptoms were experienced before, during or after an athletic activity.

By signing below, I represent and acknowledge that:

- My school has provided me with educational information concerning concussions, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) Concussion fact sheet, (See <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>), The information provided by the school discusses (1) what a concussion is, (2) the symptoms of a concussion, (3) what I should do if I think I may have a concussion, and (4) how I can help prevent a concussion.
- I have carefully reviewed the information that was provided and have had an opportunity to ask my school principal or assistant principal questions concerning the information as well as this form.
- I have fully disclosed to my coaches, team physicians and/or athletic trainers any prior injuries and illnesses that could impact my fitness to compete in sports-related activities. This includes reporting any prior head injuries or concussions that I have suffered and/or any prior concussion-related symptoms that I have experienced.
- I will immediately disclose to my coaches, team physicians, and/or athletic trainers any new injury or illness that could impact my fitness to compete in sports-related activities. This includes reporting any new head injury or concussion that I suffer and/or any new concussion-related symptoms that I experience.

- There is a possibility that my participation in sports activities, including practices as well as games, may result in a head injury or concussion. In rare cases, these conditions can cause permanent brain damage, and even death.
- A concussion can affect my ability to perform everyday activities, and can affect my reaction time, balance, sleep, and classroom performance.
- Some of the symptoms of a concussion may be noticed right away while other symptoms may only show up hours or days after the event that caused the concussion.
- If I suspect that I may have suffered a concussion or that I may be experiencing concussion-related symptoms, I will immediately report the matter to my coaches, team physicians and/or athletic trainers.
- If I suspect a teammate may have suffered a concussion or may be experiencing concussion-related symptoms, I will immediately report the matter to my coaches, team physicians or athletic trainers.
- If I have been removed from play during an athletic activity because of a concern that I may have suffered a concussion or am experiencing concussion-related symptoms, I will not return to the practice or game that same day unless a health care provider rules out a suspected concussion at or very near the time I am removed from play. If I have been removed from play during an athletic activity because of a concern that I may have suffered a concussion or am experiencing concussion-related symptoms, and a concussion was not ruled out by a health care provider at or very near the time I was removed from play, I will not thereafter return to play in a game or practice until I have been evaluated by and have received written clearance to resume participation in athletic activities from a health care provider who has been trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and head injuries, as specified by law.
- Following a concussion, the brain needs time to heal. I understand that if I receive a concussion, I am much more likely to have a repeat concussion or further damage if I return to play before my symptoms from the initial concussion fully resolve.
- The following sports have been identified as high risk sports for concussions: baseball, basketball, diving, football, pole vaulting, soccer, softball, spirit line and wrestling.

I represent and certify that my parent/guardian and I (1) have read this entire document; (2) understand the contents of this document and the consequences of signing it; and (3) agree to be bound by this document.

Student Athlete:

Student must print and sign name and indicate date signed

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian of Student of Student Athlete:

Parent or legal guardian must print and sign name and indicate date signed.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Note: AIA FORM 15.7-C 02/11 may be used in lieu of this document.

INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

Addendum to Rental or Facilities Use Agreement for Groups or Organizations using District Property or Facilities for Athletic Activities

Statutory Obligations Related to Mild Traumatic Brain Injuries and Concussions Resulting from Athletic Activities

Arizona law provides that any group or organization that uses property or facilities owned or operated by a school district for athletic activities must comply with the requirements of A.R.S. 15-341(A)(24)(b). The only exception is use of school district property or facilities by teams that are based outside of Arizona. A.R.S. 15-341(A)(24)(b), which addresses head injuries and concussions suffered by persons engaged in athletic activities, is set out below. The purpose of this Addendum is (1) to notify you, as a representative of a group or organization that desires to use District property or facilities for athletic activities, of your group or organization's obligation to comply with A.R.S. 15-341(A)(24)(b); and (2) to confirm your group or organization's agreement to do so.

For your review, attached to this Addendum is information about concussions that the District provides to its student-athletes and their parents/guardians. This information discusses concussions and head injuries and risks involved if a student continues to participate in an athletic activity after sustaining a concussion.

A.R.S. 15-341–A. 24. *“The governing board shall:*

Prescribe and enforce policies and procedures relating to the health and safety of all pupils participating in district sponsored practice sessions or games or other interscholastic athletic activities, including: (a) The provision of water. (b) Guidelines, information and forms, developed in consultation with a statewide private entity that supervises interscholastic activities, inform and educate coaches, pupils and parents of the dangers of concussions and head injuries and the risks of continued participation in athletic activity after a concussion. The policies and procedures shall require that, before a pupil participates in an athletic activity, the pupil and the pupil's parent must sign an information form at least once each school year that states that the parent is aware of the nature and risk of concussion. The policies and procedures shall require that a pupil who is suspected of sustaining a concussion in a practice session, game or other interscholastic athletic activity be immediately removed from the athletic activity. A coach from the pupil's team or an official or a licensed health care provider may remove a pupil from play. A team parent may also remove his or her own

EXHIBIT

EXHIBIT

*child from play. A pupil may return to play on the same day if a health care provider rules out a suspected concussion at the time the pupil is removed from play. On a subsequent day, the pupil may return to play if the pupil has been evaluated by and received written clearance to resume participation in athletic activity from a health care provider who has been trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries. A health care provider who is a volunteer and who provides clearance to participate in athletic activity on the day of the suspected injury or on a subsequent day is immune from civil liability with respect to all decisions made and actions taken that are based on good faith implementation of the requirements of this subdivision, except in cases of gross negligence or wanton or willful neglect. A school district, school district employee, team coach, official, team volunteer or a parent or guardian of a team member is not subject to civil liability for any act, omission or policy undertaken in good faith to comply with the requirements of this subdivision or for a decision made or an action taken by a health care provider. **A group or organization that uses property or facilities owned or operated by a school district for athletic activities shall comply with the requirements of this subdivision.** A school district and its employees and volunteers are not subject to civil liability for any other person or organization's failure or alleged failure to comply with the requirements of this subdivision. This subdivision does not apply to teams that are based in another state and that participate in an athletic activity in this state. For the purposes of this subdivision, athletic activity does not include dance, rhythmic gymnastics, competitions or exhibitions of academic skills or knowledge or other similar forms of physical noncontact activities, civic activities or academic activities, whether engaged in for the purposes of competition or recreation. For the purposes of this subdivision, "a health care provider" means a physician who is licensed pursuant to title 32, chapter 13 or 17, an athletic trainer who is licensed pursuant to title 32, chapter 41, a nurse practitioner who is licensed pursuant to title 32, chapter 15, and a physician assistant who is licensed pursuant to title 32, chapter 25."*

Your signature below denotes that you have received a separate copy of (1) this Addendum and (2) the information about concussions that is given to District student-athletes and their parents/guardians. Your signature also denotes that the group or organization you represent agrees to comply with A.R.S. 15-341(A)(24)(b) when using District property or facilities for athletic activities.

Signature of Representative of Group or Organization

Print Name _____ Date _____

Catalina Foothills Unified School District

Concussion and Head Injury Guidelines and Information

The Governing Board has developed the following Concussion and Head Injury Guidelines and Information (“Guidelines”) and the forms discussed in these Guidelines pursuant to Arizona Revised Statute (“A.R.S.”) §15-341(A)(24)(b), Governing Board Policy JJIB, and Regulation JJIB-R. The purpose of these Guidelines is to inform and educate coaches, students, and parents/guardians of the dangers of concussions and head injuries, and the risks that a student incurs if he or she continues to participate in an interscholastic athletic activity after sustaining a concussion.

In addition to the nine questions and answers that follow, these Guidelines shall include: (1) the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) Concussion Fact Sheets for Athletes, Parents, and Coaches, all three of which can also be viewed at the following CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>; and (2) the District’s Information and Acknowledgement Form Exhibit JJIB-EA. These documents should be attached to these Guidelines.

1. What District-sponsored athletic activities are covered by these Guidelines?

These Guidelines cover all District-sponsored interscholastic athletic practice sessions, games, or other interscholastic athletic activities.

The following athletic activities are not covered by these Guidelines: (1) dance; (2) rhythmic gymnastics; (3) competition or exhibitions of academic skills or knowledge or other similar forms of physical noncontact activities; (4) civic activities or academic activities, whether engaged in for the purpose of competition or recreation; and (5) any activity that is not directly or indirectly related to an interscholastic athletic activity. In addition, these Guidelines do not apply to athletic teams that are based in another state participating in athletic events in Arizona.

2. When should a student be removed from a District-sponsored athletic activity?

A student who is suspected of sustaining a concussion in a District-sponsored practice session, game, or other interscholastic athletic activity shall immediately be removed from the athletic activity. See further discussion in answers to questions 3 and 4.

3. Who can remove a student from a District-sponsored athletic activity?

A coach or trainer from the student's team, an official or referee, or a licensed health care provider may remove a student from play based on that person's concern that the student may have sustained a concussion.

In addition, a parent/guardian of a player may remove his or her own child from play based on the parent's/guardian's concern that his or her child may have sustained a concussion.

4. If a student is removed from a District-sponsored athletic activity because of a suspected concussion, when may the student return to participate in the athletic activity?

If a student is removed from a District-sponsored athletic activity because of a suspected concussion, the student may not return to participate in an athletic activity on the same day unless a health care provider rules out a suspected concussion at or near the time the student is removed from play. If this does not occur, the student may not thereafter return to play until the student has been evaluated by and receives written clearance to resume participation in athletic activities from a health care provider who has been trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries. A.R.S. §15-341(A)(24)(b) contains a specific definition of the term "health care provider" for the above purposes.

5. What are the Superintendent's responsibilities under these Guidelines?

The Superintendent shall be responsible:

- for distributing to school principals a copy of: (a) these Guidelines, including the three CDC Fact Sheets and the District's Information and Acknowledgement Form Exhibit JJIB-EA, which are attachments to and are considered a part of these Guidelines, and (b) the District form entitled "Addendum to Rental or Facilities Use Agreement for Groups or Organizations that Use District Property or Facilities for Athletic Activities" (Exhibit JJIB-EB).
- for designating the District administrator(s) who shall be responsible for ensuring that outside groups and organizations that desire to use District-owned or District-operated property or facilities for athletic activities receive a copy of these Guidelines, including the attachments thereto, and execute the District form entitled "Addendum to Rental or Facilities Use Agreement for Groups or Organizations that Use District Property or Facilities for Athletic Activities" (Exhibit JJIB-EB).

6. What are the Principals' responsibilities under these Guidelines?

Students and Parents/Guardians: Each school year, before a student is permitted to participate in a District-sponsored interscholastic athletic

activity, including practice sessions as well as games, the principal of the school the student attends shall be responsible for insuring that:

- the student and his or her parent/guardian are provided with a copy of these Guidelines, including the attachments thereto.
- the student and his or her parent/guardian have the opportunity to ask the principal or an assistant principal any questions they may have about any aspect of these Guidelines, the CDC Concussion Fact Sheets, and/or the Information and Acknowledgement Form Exhibit JJIB-EA (or AIA Form 15.7-C 02/11).
- the student and his or her parent/guardian sign an Information and Acknowledgement Form, Exhibit JJIB-EA (or AIA Form 15.7-C 02/11), which, among other things, acknowledges that the student and parent/guardian have read the form and understand the contents of the form and have had the opportunity to ask the principal or an assistant principal any questions they may have about any aspect of these Guidelines, the CDC Concussion Fact Sheets, and/or the Information and/or Acknowledgement Form Exhibit JJIB-EA (or AIA Form 15.7-C 02/11).
- the student and his or her parent/guardian return the signed Information and Acknowledgement Form Exhibit JJIB-EA (or AIA Form 15.7-C 02/11) to the principal's office, where it will be maintained.

Coaches: Each school year, school principals shall meet with the coaches at their respective schools who are involved in coaching interscholastic athletic activities and insure that:

- each athletic activity coach is provided with a copy of these Guidelines including the attachments thereto.
- each athletic activity coach attends a meeting the purpose of which is to review and discuss the Guidelines, including specifically the CDC Concussion Fact Sheet for Coaches.
- each athletic activity coach's participation in such a meeting is documented prior to the time that the coach begins any coaching assignment that school year.

Other Staff: Each school year, school principals shall inform all staff members assigned to their respective schools about these Guidelines including the attachments thereto.

Non-District Groups or Organizations Who Desire to Use District Property or Facilities for Athletic Activities: See answer to question 7 below.

7. What about a non-District group or organization that desires to use

District-owned or District-operated property or facilities for athletic activities?

A non-District group or organization that desires to use District-owned or District-operated property or facilities for athletic activities must be informed of its obligation to comply with, and must agree in writing to comply with, A.R.S. §15-341(A)(24)(b).

District administrator(s) who has been assigned this responsibility by the Superintendent shall ensure that each outside group or organization that desires to use District property or facilities for athletic activities:

- is given a copy of these Guidelines, including the attachments thereto.
- executes the District form entitled “Addendum to Rental or Facilities Use Agreement for Groups or Organizations that Use District Property or Facilities for Athletic Activities.” This form, which is Exhibit JJIB-EB, informs the group or organization about, and requires the group or organization to comply with, the provisions of A.R.S. §15-341(A)(24)(b).

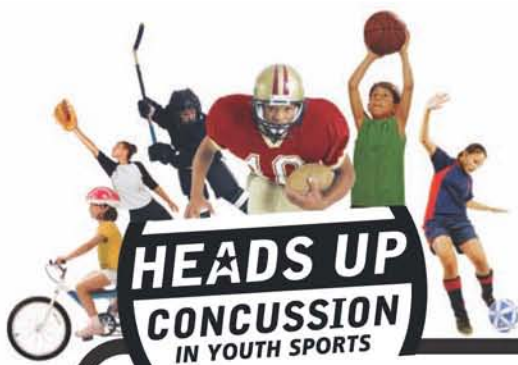
The requirements set out above do not apply to teams based in another state participating in athletic events in Arizona.

8. Is there civil liability for any act or omission undertaken in good faith to comply with the requirements of District Policy JJIB and/or these Guidelines, or decisions made or actions taken by a health care provider relating to the obligations imposed by A.R.S. §15-341(A)(24)(b)?

A.R.S. §15-341(A)(24)(b) provides that a District employee, team coach, official team volunteer, or a parent or guardian of a team member shall not be subject to civil liability for any act, omission or policy undertaken in good faith to comply with the requirements of A.R.S. §15-341(A)(24)(b) or for decisions made or actions taken by a health care provider in relation to A.R.S. §15-341(A)(24)(b). Further, the District and its employees and volunteers are not subject to civil liability for any other person or organization’s failure to comply with the requirements of A.R.S. §15-341(A)(24)(b).

9. May the Arizona Interscholastic Association (“AIA”) impose obligations in addition to those set out in these Guidelines?

Yes. The AIA can and does impose obligations on coaches and student athletes in addition to those set out in these Guidelines. Currently, AIA regulation 14.14 provides that all student athletes must complete the “Brainbook” online concussion education course. The link to the AIA bylaws is http://www.aiaonline.org/about/constitution_bylaws.php.



A Fact Sheet for **ATHLETES**

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light
- Bothered by noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.

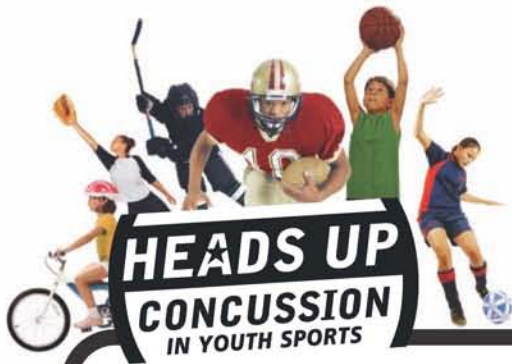
- **Get a medical check up.** A doctor or health care professional can tell you if you have a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.

HOW CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
 - The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
 - Worn correctly and fit well
 - Used every time you play

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.



HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

A Fact Sheet for PARENTS

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

- 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 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

- Headache 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”

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

- 1. Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.
- 2. Keep your child out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play until a health care professional says it’s OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- 3. Tell your child’s coach about any recent concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.



HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

A Fact Sheet for **COACHES**

To download the coaches fact sheet in Spanish, please visit www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports
Para descargar la hoja informativa para los entrenadores en español, por favor visite:
www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports

THE FACTS

- 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.

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost.

The potential for concussions is greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common.¹ Concussions can occur, however, in **any** organized or unorganized sport or

recreational activity. As many as 3.8 million sports- and recreation-related concussions occur in the United States each year.²

RECOGNIZING A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION

To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for the following two things among your athletes:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.

-and-

2. Any change in the athlete’s behavior, thinking, or physical functioning. (See the signs and symptoms of concussion listed on the next page.)

It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows 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

- Headache 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"

Adapted from Lovell et al. 2004

Athletes who experience any of these signs or symptoms after a bump or blow to the head should be kept from play until given permission to return to play by a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can last from several minutes to days, weeks, months, or even longer in some cases.

Remember, you can't see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury. If you have any suspicion that your athlete has a concussion, you should keep the athlete out of the game or practice.

PREVENTION AND PREPARATION

As a coach, you can play a key role in preventing concussions and responding to them properly when they occur. Here are some steps you can take to ensure the best outcome for your athletes and the team:

- **Educate athletes and parents about concussion.** Talk with athletes and their parents about the dangers and potential long-term consequences of concussion. For more information on long-term effects of concussion, view the following online video clip: http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/Coaches_Tool_Kit.htm#Video.

Explain your concerns about concussion and your expectations of safe play to athletes, parents, and assistant coaches. Pass out the concussion fact sheets for athletes and for parents at the beginning of the season and again if a concussion occurs.

- **Insist that safety comes first.**
 - > Teach athletes safe playing techniques and encourage them to follow the rules of play.
 - > Encourage athletes to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
 - > Make sure athletes wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
 - > Review the athlete fact sheet with your team to help them recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

Check with your youth sports league or administrator about concussion policies. Concussion policy statements can be developed to include the league's commitment to safety, a brief description of concussion, and information on when athletes can safely return to play following a concussion (i.e., an athlete with known or suspected concussion should be kept

from play until evaluated and given permission to return by a health care professional). Parents and athletes should sign the concussion policy statement at the beginning of the sports season.

- **Teach athletes and parents that it's not smart to play with a concussion.** Sometimes players and parents wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let athletes persuade you that they're "just fine" after they have sustained any bump or blow to the head. Ask if players have ever had a concussion.
- **Prevent long-term problems.** A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage, and even death. This more serious condition is called *second impact syndrome*.^{4,5} Keep athletes with known or suspected concussion from play until they have been evaluated and given permission to return to play by a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion. Remind your athletes: "It's better to miss one game than the whole season."

ACTION PLAN

WHAT SHOULD A COACH DO WHEN A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED?

- 1. Remove the athlete from play.** Look for the signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head. Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of concussion should not be allowed to return to play. When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play.
- 2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
 - Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head
 - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long
 - Any memory loss immediately following the injury
 - Any seizures immediately following the injury
 - Number of previous concussions (if any)

- 3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.**

Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.

- 4. Allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion.** A repeat concussion that

occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. Prevent common long-term problems and the rare *second impact syndrome* by delaying the athlete's return to the activity until the player receives appropriate medical evaluation and approval for return to play.

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If you think your athlete has sustained a concussion... take him/her out of play, and seek the advice of a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.