

CONCUSSION POLICY OF WAKEFIELD SOCCER ASSOCIATION

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.

You cannot see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion show up right after injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If a player reports any symptoms of concussion or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion, seek medical attention right away.

The signs and symptoms are any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning. These can include appearing dazed or stunned, being confused about assignment or position, forgetting plays, being unsure about game, score, or opponent, moving clumsily, answering questions slowly, and not being able to recall events prior to the hit or fall, or after the hit or fall. The athlete may report a headache or pressure in the head, nausea or vomiting, balance problems or dizziness, double or blurry vision, sensitivity to light or noise, feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy, concentration or memory problems, confusion, or just not feeling right.

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. A copy of such written clearance to return to play from a licensed health care provider must be given to the coach.

Athletes may not report symptoms due to wanting to play or not understanding signs and symptoms. Question the honesty of the athlete. Watch for headache, vomiting, etc. Watch for any behavioral changes, cognitive changes, or balance changes. Observe the player on the sideline. Young athletes recover more slowly from concussions than adults. Female soccer players had a 40% higher incidence rate than male soccer players.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of every player to inform the coach immediately if the player suffers a concussion or apparent head injury in any activity, including outside of soccer.

Everyone needs to work together, coaches and parents. Our emphasis is on safety, not on rapid return to play. Each concussion needs a minimum of one week off from game competition and practice. Each head injury is different, and some may require more time off. Second concussions before complete recovery can be devastating and career ending.

As adopted August 29, 2011