

## Appendix III – NCRA Concussion Policy

### **NCRA Concussion Policy**

#### **Definitions:**

The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

1. “Participant” – Coaches, athletes, volunteers, and officials
2. “Concussion” - is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. It can cause an alteration in thinking and behaving as a result of physical impact to the brain. A concussion is a clinical diagnosis that can only be confirmed by a physician.

#### **Purpose:**

NCRA is committed to ensuring the safety of everyone participating in the sport of ringette. NCRA 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.

Accompanying Ringette Canada’s Concussion Management Guidelines, this Policy provides protocol to be followed in the event of a possible Concussion. Awareness of the signs and symptoms of Concussion and knowledge of how to properly manage a Concussion are critical to recovery and helping to ensure the individual is not returning to physical activities too soon, risking further complication. Ringette Canada’s Concussion Management Guidelines can be found [here](#).

A Concussion is a clinical diagnosis that can only be made by a physician.

#### **Procedure:**

During all events, competitions, and practices, Participants must refer to the Concussion Management Guidelines and use their best efforts to be aware of and prevent incidents that may cause a Concussion, and 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 are included in the Concussion Management Guidelines.

1. Coach / Administrator / Supervisor Responsibilities:
  - a. All members of the NCRA community (including coaches, managers, officials, and even parents) should be familiar with their responsibilities under the Concussion Management Guidelines. The Guidelines explain how to recognize signs of a Concussion, the initial actions that should be taken, the return to play protocols and the reporting responsibilities to Ringette Canada. Refer to [Annex A](#) for a quick Concussion Recognition Tool which can also be found on Ringette Canada website [here](#). NCRA’s Concussion Code of Conduct for Parents and Athletes along with NCRA’s Concussion Code of Conduct for Coaches and Team Staff will be handed out at the start of the season and be returned, signed to the Team Manager.
  - b. Every possible Concussion incident must be reported to NCRA. The Concussion Incident Report Form can be found [here](#).
2. Return to Play
  - a. A Participant with a suspected Concussion, even if the Participant was not rendered unconscious, will not be permitted to return to play until the Participant has consulted a physician.

- b. Prior to returning to play, the Participant must consult and follow the Return to Play section of the Concussion Management Guidelines. The Athlete Concussions Medical Report form must be completed by a physician. This form can be found [here](#).
- 3. Medical Clearance
  - a. In following the Return to Play section of the Concussion Management Guidelines, the participant will have been required to consult a medical physician.
  - b. Once the Participant has been given medical clearance by a physician, the coach, administrator and/or supervisor is required to forward a copy of the medical clearance letter to NCRA for the purpose of monitoring.
- 4. Summary of Reporting Obligations
  - a. NCRA must be informed whenever a possible Concussion incident occurs, the result of consultation with a medical professional, and when the participant is able to return to play. To summarize, the following forms need be completed:
    - i. Concussion Incident Form can be found [here](#).
    - ii. Letter from physician indicating that participant is cleared to resume participating in ringette activities. The Athlete Concussions Medical Report form must be completed by a physician. This form can be found [here](#).
- 5. Non-Compliance
  - a. Failure to abide by any of the guidelines and/or protocols contained within this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Ringette Canada's Discipline and Complaints Policy.
- 6. Review
  - a. This Policy and the Concussion Management Guidelines will be reviewed regularly.



## **Concussion Code of Conduct for Athletes and Parents/Guardians (Of athletes under 18 year of age)**

This is NCRA's Concussion Code of Conduct for Ringette NS athletes and parents/guardians. Refer to NCRA Policy and Procedures Appendix III for full policy and procedures.

### **I will help prevent concussions by:**

- Wearing the proper equipment for my sport and wearing it correctly.
- Developing my skills and strength so that I can participate to the best of my ability.
- Respecting the rules of my sport or activity.
- My commitment to fair play and respect for all (other athletes, coaches, team staff and officials).
- Commitment to zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions
- Acknowledgement of mandatory expulsion from competition for violating zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions (Meaning: I will be disqualified/expelled from play if I violate the zero-tolerance policy).
- Acknowledgement of the escalating consequences for those who repeatedly violate the Concussion Code of Conduct. \*

### **I will care for my health and safety by taking concussions seriously, and I understand that:**

- A concussion is a brain injury that can have both short- and long-term effects.
- A blow to my head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that causes the brain to move around inside the skull may cause a concussion.
- I don't need to lose consciousness to have had a concussion.
- I have a commitment to concussion recognition and reporting, including self-reporting of possible concussion and reporting to a designated person when and individual suspects that another individual may have sustained a concussion. (Meaning: If I think I might have a concussion I should stop participating in further training, practice or competition immediately, or tell an adult if I think another athlete has a concussion).
- Continuing to participate in further training, practice or competition with a possible concussion increases my risk of more severe, longer lasting symptoms, and increases my risk of other injuries.

### **I will not hide concussion symptoms. I will speak up for myself and others.**

- I will not hide my symptoms. I will tell a coach, official, manager, parent or another adult I trust if I experience any symptoms of concussion.
- If someone else tells me about concussion symptoms, or I see signs they might have a concussion, I will tell a coach, official, manager, parent or another adult I trust so they can help.

- I understand that if I have a suspected concussion, I will be removed from sport and that I will not be able to return to training, practice or competition until I undergo a medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner and have been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition.
- I have a commitment to sharing any pertinent information regarding incidents of removal from sport with the athlete's school and any other sport organization with which the athlete has registered (Meaning: If I am diagnosed with a concussion, I understand that letting all of my other coaches and teachers know about my injury will help them support me while I recover.)

**I will take the time I need to recover, because it is important for my health.**

- I understand my commitment to supporting the return-to-sport process (I will have to follow my sport organization's Return-to-Sport Protocol).
- I understand I will have to be medically cleared by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to training, practice or competition.
- I will respect my coaches, team managers, parents, health-care professionals, and medical doctors and nurse practitioners, regarding my health and safety.

**By signing here, I acknowledge that I have fully reviewed and commit to this Concussion Code of Conduct.**

<b>Athlete Name</b> <i>(please print)</i>	<b>Athlete Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Parent/Guardian Name</b> <i>(please print)</i> (If under 18 years of age)	<b>Parent/Guardian Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Parent/Guardian Name</b> <i>(please print)</i> (If under 18 years of age)	<b>Parent/Guardian Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>



## Concussion Code of Conduct for Coaches and Team Staff

This is NCRA's Concussion Code of Conduct for coaches and team staff. Refer to NCRA Policy and Procedures Appendix III for full policy and procedures.

### **I can help prevent concussions through my:**

- Efforts to ensure that my athletes wear the proper equipment and wear it correctly.
- Efforts to help my athletes develop their skills and strength so they can participate to the best of their abilities.
- Respect for the rules of my sport or activity and efforts to ensure that my athletes do, too.
- Commitment to fair play and respect for all (respecting other coaches, team staff, officials and all participants and ensuring my athletes respect others and play fair).
- Commitment to zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions.
- Acknowledgement of mandatory expulsion from competition for violating zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions.
- Acknowledgement of the escalating consequences for those who repeatedly violate the Concussion Code of Conduct.

### **I will care for the health and safety of all participants by taking concussions seriously. I understand that:**

- A concussion is a brain injury that can have both short- and long-term effects.
- A blow to the head, face, or neck, or a blow to the body may cause the brain to move around inside the skull and result in a concussion.
- A person doesn't need to lose consciousness to have had a concussion.
- An athlete with a suspected concussion should stop participating in training, practice or competition **immediately**.
- I have a commitment to concussion recognition and reporting, including self-reporting of possible concussion and reporting to a designated person when an individual suspects that another individual may have sustained a concussion.
- Continuing to participate in further training, practice or competition with a suspected concussion increases a person's risk of more severe, longer lasting symptoms, and increases their risk of other injuries or even death.

### **I will create an environment where participants feel safe and comfortable speaking up. I will:**

- Encourage athletes not to hide their symptoms, but to tell me, an official, parent or another adult they trust if they experience any symptoms of concussion after an impact.

- Lead by example. I will tell a fellow coach, official, and seek medical attention by a physician or nurse practitioner if I am experiencing any concussion symptoms.
- Understand and respect that any athlete with a suspected concussion must be removed from sport and not permitted to return until they undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner and have been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition.
- For coaches only: Commit to providing opportunities before and after each training, practice and competition to enable athletes to discuss potential issues related to concussions.

**I will support all participants to take the time they need to recover.**

- I understand my commitment to supporting the return-to-sport process.
- I understand the athletes will have to be cleared by a physician or nurse practitioner before returning to sport.
- I will respect my fellow coaches, team staff, parents, physicians and nurse practitioners and any decisions made with regards to the health and safety of my athletes.

**By signing here, I acknowledge that I have fully reviewed and commit to this Concussion Code of Conduct.**

Role	Name <i>(please print)</i>	Signature	Date

# CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL 5<sup>©</sup>

To help identify concussion in children, adolescents and adults



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## RECOGNISE & REMOVE

Head impacts can be associated with serious and potentially fatal brain injuries. The Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5) is to be used for the identification of suspected concussion. It is not designed to diagnose concussion.

### STEP 1: RED FLAGS — CALL AN AMBULANCE

If there is concern after an injury including whether ANY of the following signs are observed or complaints are reported then the player should be safely and immediately removed from play/game/activity. If no licensed healthcare professional is available, call an ambulance for urgent medical assessment:

- Neck pain or tenderness
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs
- Severe or increasing headache
- Seizure or convulsion
- Loss of consciousness
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Vomiting
- Increasingly restless, agitated or combative

#### Remember:

- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid (danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) should be followed.
- Assessment for a spinal cord injury is critical.
- Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so.
- Do not remove a helmet or any other equipment unless trained to do so safely.

If there are no Red Flags, identification of possible concussion should proceed to the following steps:

### STEP 2: OBSERVABLE SIGNS

Visual clues that suggest possible concussion include:

- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Disorientation or confusion, or an inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Blank or vacant look
- Balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow laboured movements
- Facial injury after head trauma

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### STEP 3: SYMPTOMS

- Headache
- "Pressure in head"
- Balance problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Fatigue or low energy
- "Don't feel right"
- More emotional
- More Irritable
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious
- Neck Pain
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Feeling slowed down
- Feeling like "in a fog"

### STEP 4: MEMORY ASSESSMENT

(IN ATHLETES OLDER THAN 12 YEARS)

Failure to answer any of these questions (modified appropriately for each sport) correctly may suggest a concussion:

- "What venue are we at today?"
- "Which half is it now?"
- "Who scored last in this game?"
- "What team did you play last week/game?"
- "Did your team win the last game?"

### Athletes with suspected concussion should:

- Not be left alone initially (at least for the first 1-2 hours).
- Not drink alcohol.
- Not use recreational/ prescription drugs.
- Not be sent home by themselves. They need to be with a responsible adult.
- Not drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a healthcare professional.

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**ANY ATHLETE WITH A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PRACTICE OR PLAY AND SHOULD NOT RETURN TO ACTIVITY UNTIL ASSESSED MEDICALLY, EVEN IF THE SYMPTOMS RESOLVE**

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