

# **Regina Soccer Association (RSA) Concussion Information**

## **Introduction**

Concussions in sport have been in the media spotlight for the past two years with the higher incidence and public awareness of professional athletes. In spite of this, the incidence rate is still high. With a number of medical organizations and professional health care associations making concussion awareness a priority, the creation of a concussion management protocol for the RSA is prudent. This organization along with many other organizations involved in youth sport, is committed to making a concussion campaign as policy for all those individuals who are involved in sport.

Concussions can happen to anyone and can occur in virtually any activity. A recent study at McGill University indicated that two of the key factors behind serious and/or repeated concussions were a lack of awareness about brain injury. In conjunction with the Sport Medicine and Science Council, the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association and the University of Saskatchewan, a number of initiatives and protocols have been developed.

## **Facts about Concussions**

- you don't need to be knocked out to suffer a concussion
- a concussion is a mild brain injury that affects the brain's functions
- every four minutes, a concussion occurs in Canada
- there are approximately 6,000 concussions in Saskatchewan every year
- a person is four times as likely to suffer a second concussion after having the first one and the effects may be more serious with each subsequent injury
- signs/symptoms can show up immediately or may not be noticeable for hours or days
- concussion symptoms differ with each person
- one in five sports injuries is a head injury
- if you think you have a concussion, **YOU SHOULD NOT RETURN TO PLAY**, and see your health care professional for diagnosis, treatment and a 'Return to Play' strategy

**WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!**

# Concussion Awareness Fact Sheet

## What is a Concussion?

- by definition
  - "Concussion is a brain injury and is defined as a complete pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces"
- practically
  - a disruption of normal brain function caused by some type of outside force

## Mechanism of Injury

- direct contact to head
- head contacting other object
- impulsive force

## Signs of a Concussion

- loss of consciousness
- balance problems
- unbalanced, uncoordinated movements
- disorientation or confusion
- memory loss
- blank or vacant stare
- acting different than usual

## Symptoms of a Concussion

- early symptoms
  - headache or pressure in head
  - neck pain
  - nausea
  - dizziness
  - blurred vision
  - balance problems
  - feeling 'slowed down'
  - feeling like 'in a fog'
  - "Don't feel right"
  - confusion
- delayed symptoms
  - light sensitivity
  - noise sensitivity

- difficulty concentrating
  - difficulty remembering
  - fatigue/low energy
  - drowsiness
  - trouble falling asleep
  - more emotional
  - irritability
  - sadness
  - nervous or anxious
- signs and symptoms may not always be apparent
  - may need to investigate further
    - **if you know your athlete:**
      - ♣ are they behaving weird?
      - ♣ is something off?

## Recognition

- ensure no other major injuries prior to assessing for concussion
  - numbness/tingling in extremities
  - severe neck pain
  - athlete does not want to move due to pain

## Concussion Management Protocol

### Stage 1

- rest until asymptomatic
- Rest, rest, rest
  - physical and mental rest
    - ♣ no activity, sports, video games, computer, TV
    - ♣ remove from school if needed
    - ♣ be cautious with sleeping during the day

### Stage 2

- light aerobic exercise
- exercise bike, 20 minutes, heart rate of approximately 120
- no resistance/weight training

### Stage 3

- sport-specific exercise
- may add light weight resistance/weight training

#### **Stage 4**

- non-contact practice
- progress to heavier weights

#### **Stage 5**

- medical clearance
- full contact training

#### **Stage 6**

- return to competition
- **decision needs to be made by qualified, medical personnel only**

**These six stages are provided as guidelines only. There are other factors that may need to be considered as well. Upon decision to begin the six stages to return to play protocol, it must be emphasized that if the athlete suffers from one or more symptoms of the concussion, the athlete must cease activity immediately and once symptom free, return to Stage 1 of the six step recovery plan.**

Source:

Saskatchewan High School Athletic Association (SHSAA). (2015). SHSAA Concussion Protocol. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/Admin/Pictures/SHSAA\_Concussion\_Protocol\_final.pdf

