



WORA – Concussion Awareness

In recent years, the reporting of concussions has been on the rise. As a result, parents and players have become more aware of the potential for this injury in our sport. As an Association, we continue to see the research and advice develop and change over time as the medical communities understanding of concussions changes. While players and their parents are ultimately responsible for ensuring they are informed of the risks, and the best way to address those risks as it relates to their own circumstances, WORA is also committed to continuously update policies and procedures and to ensure our members are well informed of those policies and procedures.

As an Association, WORA is committed to ensuring that we:

- take steps to help inform our members of the possibility of injury, including those that are particular to ringette, and
- try to ensure that we help our coaches and players reduce the risk of injury as much as possible.

In support of this, WORA has created 2 specific documents that are relevant to concussions:

- [Return from Injury](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)

Players and parents should take time to become familiar with these documents. From the Return from Injury Policy, it is important to note, in particular, that **it remains at the discretion of the WORA Vice President, in consultation with the West Ottawa Ringette Association Executive, to determine if a player shall return to ringette activity following a suspected injury.** That determination will always be done based upon what is believed to be in the best interests of the player's well-being. To support that decision, the VP and Executive will rely on the team's trainer (first aid provider).

In addition to these 2 documents, you will see WORA continue to provide players and parents with information on concussions of which we become aware. We will continue to work with our trainers and coaches to help connect them with resources about concussion aware.

If you have any questions, speak to a member of the WORA Executive, your coach or your doctor and take time to access some of the many resources that available on this topic.

However, ultimately, parents and players are responsible for ensuring they are aware of current information regarding concussions. Parents and players are in the best position to make determinations and decisions about concussions. In all cases, these decisions must be made on the basis of what is in the best interests of the players ONLY, including in particular their health and safety. WORA is committed to putting fun and safety above all else and expects its players and parents to make this same commitment.

At present, here are some of the suggested potential signs and symptoms of concussions:

- loss of consciousness
- balance or motor incoordination
- loss of memory
- sensitivity to light or noise
- nausea
- dizziness
- headaches
- confusion and/or disorientation
- neck pain
- feeling of pressure in the head
- blurred vision
- difficulty concentrating
- change in temperament

Baseline Testing: Baseline testing is believed, by some, to be an effective tool to assist parents and players when making a “return to play” decision. The research on their effectiveness is not conclusive. At this time, neither Ringette Canada nor the ORA has specifically recommended baseline testing. Despite this, some parents may still choose to take advantage of this tool. The service can be found at many physiotherapy and chiropractic centers for a cost of usually between \$60 and \$100. In this testing, players undergo a combination of neuropsychological and physical tests, the results of which can be used in the future as a reference point in the case of an injury.

Mouth guards: The effectiveness of mouth guards in preventing/reducing the impact of concussions is not conclusive. Regardless, at this time, mouth guards are mandatory for all levels of play within the NCRRL.

Ultimately, you know yourself or your player best. Trust your instincts. Parent, players and bench staff must all work together and must speak up if they have any concern that a player may have suffered a concussion. If you are unsure, it is ALWAYS better to be safe than sorry.

September 2017
