



IOWA HIGH SCHOOL  
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



# IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION IOWA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC UNION CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

*Iowa Code Section 280.13C states, in part, “Annually, each school district and nonpublic school shall provide to the parent or guardian of each student a concussion and brain information sheet, as provided by the Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union. The student and student’s parent or guardian shall sign and return the concussion and brain injury information sheet to the student’s school prior to the student’s participation in any interscholastic activity for grades seven through twelve. If a student’s coach or contest official observes signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury in an extracurricular interscholastic activity, the student shall be immediately removed for participation. A student who has been removed from participation shall not recommence such participation until the student has been evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and other brain injuries and the student has received written clearance to return to participation from the health care provider.*

*For the purposes of this section, a licensed health care provider means a physician, physician’s assistant, chiropractor, advanced registered nurse practitioner, nurse, physical therapist, or licensed athletic trainer.*

*For the purposes of this section, an extracurricular interscholastic activity means any extracurricular interscholastic activity, contest, or practice, including sports, dance, and cheerleading.”*

- 1. No student should return to play/competition (RTP) or practice on the same day of a concussion.**
- 2. A licensed health care provider as defined in Iowa Code Section 280.13C should evaluate a student suspected of having a concussion on the same day the injury occurs.**
- 3. After medical clearance by a licensed health care provider as defined in Iowa Code Section 280.13C, RTP should follow a stepwise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP based upon return of any signs or symptoms.**

**4. Education of contest officials, school coaches and other appropriate school personnel, contestants, parents, and licensed health care providers.**

- The Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union will provide a variety of educational materials related to concussions and brain injuries developed by the CDC and other organizations knowledgeable about concussions.

**5. Removing an injured student from participation, deciding whether he or she has sustained a concussion, and return to participation protocol.**

- It is the responsibility of the contest officials' and the student's coach to recognize that a student may be exhibiting signs, symptoms, & behaviors of a concussion and remove him or her from the contest. Once the student has been removed from the contest, the officials' responsibility for the student's safety is over and the student is in the care of the school's coach and/or a licensed health care provider as defined in Iowa Code 280.13C.
- A student removed from participation due to exhibiting signs, symptoms, & behaviors of a concussion shall not recommence such participation until a licensed health care provider as defined in Iowa Code 280.13C has provided written clearance for the student to return to participation.
- Licensed health care providers as defined in Iowa Code 280.13C should follow return to participation (*practice and competition*) protocol before allowing a student who has been exhibiting signs, symptoms, & behaviors of a concussion to return to any kind of participation (practice and/or competition).

**6. In cases where the Iowa High School Athletic Association or Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union have designated licensed health care providers as defined in Iowa Code 280.13C for their sponsored events/tournaments, the decision of those licensed health care providers regarding a student who is exhibiting signs, symptoms, and behaviors consistent with a concussion returning to competition at any time during those events/tournaments shall be final.**

# **RETURN TO PARTICIPATION PROTOCOL FOLLOWING A CONCUSSION (INFORMATION FOR LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS)**

Return to participation following a concussion is a medical decision made on an individual basis by licensed health care providers. Medical experts in concussion believe a concussed student should meet ALL of the following criteria in order to progress to return to activity. While the protocol below is not mandatory, it will help licensed health care providers as defined in Iowa Code Section 280.13C determine when return to participation is appropriate:

- **Asymptomatic at rest, and with exertion (including mental exertion in school), AND have written clearance** from physician, physician's assistant, chiropractor, advanced registered nurse practitioner, nurse, physical therapist or licensed athletic trainer . ***\*Written clearance to return by one of these licensed health care providers is REQUIRED by Iowa Code Section 280.13C!***
- Once the criteria above are met, **the student should progress back to full activity following the stepwise process** detailed below. A licensed health care provider as defined in Iowa Code Section 280.13C, or their designee, should closely supervise this progression.
- **Progression to return is individualized and should be determined on a case-by-case basis.** Factors that may affect the rate of progression include: previous history of concussion, duration and type of symptoms, age of the student, and sport/activity in which the student participates. A student with a history of concussion, one who has had an extended duration of symptoms, or one who is participating in a collision or contact sport may progress more slowly as determined by a licensed health care provider as defined in Iowa Code Section 280.13C, or their designee.

**Step 1. Complete physical and cognitive rest.** No exertional activity until asymptomatic. This may include staying home from school or limiting school hours (and studying) for several days. Activities requiring concentration and attention may worsen symptoms and delay recovery.

**Step 2. Return to school full-time /normal cognitive daily activities (or normal cognitive functions).**

**Step 3. Low impact, light aerobic exercise.** This step should not begin until the student is no longer having concussion symptoms and is cleared by the treating licensed health care provider. At this point the student may begin brisk walking, light jogging, swimming or riding an exercise bike at less than 70% maximum performance heart rate. No weight or resistance training.

**Step 4. Basic exercise,** such as running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.

**Step 5. Non-contact, sport-specific training drills** (dribbling, ball handling, batting, fielding, running drills, etc.) in full equipment. Weight-training can begin.

**Step 6. Following medical clearance\*, full contact practice or training.**

**Step 7. Normal competition in a contest.**

**NOTE:** Generally, **each step should take a minimum of 24 hours.** If post concussion symptoms occur at **ANY** step, the student must stop the activity and their licensed health care provider as defined in Iowa Code Section 280.13C should be contacted. If any post-concussion symptoms occur during this process the student should drop back to the previous asymptomatic level and begin the progression again after an additional 24-hour period of rest has taken place.

*References: "Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports," NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee 2009; "Consensus State on Concussion in Sport 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference in Sport Held in Zurich, November 2008," Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine, Volume 19, Number 3, May 2009.*