**Concussion Fact Sheet for Student Athletes**

**What is a concussion?**

A concussion is a brain injury that:

• Is caused by a blow to the head or body.

– From contact with another player, hitting a hard surface suchas the ground, ice or floor, or being hit by a piece of equipmentsuch as a bat, lacrosse stick or field hockey ball.

• Can change the way your brain normally works.

• Can range from mild to severe.

• Presents itself differently for each athlete.

• Can occur during practice or competition in ANY sport.

• Can happen even if you do not lose consciousness.

**How can I prevent a concussion?**

Basic steps you can take to protect yourself from concussion:

• Do not initiate contact with your head or helmet. You can still geta concussion if you are wearing a helmet.

• Avoid striking an opponent in the head. Undercutting, flyingelbows, stepping on a head, checking an unprotected opponent,and sticks to the head all cause concussions.

• Follow your athletics department’s rules for safety and the rules ofthe sport.

• Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

• Practice and perfect the skills of the sport.

**What are the symptoms of a concussion?**

You can’t see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptomsright away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury.

Concussion symptoms include:

• Amnesia.

• Confusion.

• Headache.

• Loss of consciousness.

• Balance problems or dizziness.

• Double or fuzzy vision.

• Sensitivity to light or noise.

• Nausea (feeling that you might vomit).

• Feeling sluggish, foggy or groggy.

• Feeling unusually irritable.

• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays, facts,meeting times).

• Slowed reaction time.

Exercise or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such asstudying, working on the computer, or playing video games may causeconcussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness) to reappear orget worse.

**What should I do if I think I have a concussion?**

**Don’t hide it.** Tell your athletic trainer and coach**.** Never ignore a blow to the head. Also,tell your athletic trainer and coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that you can get checked out.

**Report it.** Do not return to participation in a game, practice or other activity withsymptoms. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to return to play.

**Get checked out.** Your team physician, athletic trainer, or health care professionalcan tell you if you have had a concussion and when you are cleared to return to play.A concussion can affect your ability to perform everyday activities, your reaction time,balance, sleep and classroom performance.

**Take time to recover.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. Whileyour brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a repeat concussion. In rarecases, repeat concussions can cause permanent brain damage, and even death. Severebrain injury can change your whole life.

**It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.**

When in doubt, get checked out.

For more information and resources, visit www.NCAA.org/health-safety and [www.CDC.gov/Concussion](http://www.CDC.gov/Concussion).

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