



WAHA CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT POLICY

A concussion management program must be incorporated within each WAHA member Association. Accepted medical practice and the State Law requires that any athlete with a suspected Sports Related Concussion ***is immediately removed from play!***

Any player with **any symptoms/signs** or a **worrisome mechanism of injury** has a concussion until proven otherwise:

"WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!"

- A Sports Related Concussion (SRC) is a traumatic brain injury- ***there is no such thing as a minor brain injury.***
- A player does not have to be "*knocked-out*" to have a SRC- ***less than 10% of players actually lose consciousness.***
- A SRC can result from a blow to head, neck, ***or body.***
- SRCs often occur to players who don't have or just released the puck, from open-ice hits, unanticipated hits, and illegal collisions.
- The **youth** hockey player's brain is ***more susceptible*** to SRC.
- SRC in a young athlete may be ***harder*** to diagnosis, takes ***longer*** to recover, and is ***more likely*** to have a recurrence, which can be associated with serious long-term effects.
- The strongest predictor of slower recovery from a concussion is the severity of **initial symptoms** *in the first day or 2* after the injury.
- Treatment is individualized and it is impossible to predict when the athlete will be allowed to return to play- ***there is no standard timetable.***
- Baseline or pre-season **neuropsychological testing** is not mandatory but may be helpful for return-to-play decision making when an athlete feels normal.
- The use of helmet-based or other **sensor systems** to diagnose or assess SRC require further research before implementation.

Follow these concussion management steps:

1. Remove immediately from play (training, practice, or game)
2. If removed by an on-ice official or coach, notify the parents/guardians)
3. File a WAHA Initial Report of a Concussion found on the WAHA Website.
4. Athlete should be referred to a qualified healthcare
5. professional.
6. Initial treatment requires a short period of rest, but the athlete may participate in light exercise (if their symptoms are not made worse).
7. Begin a graded return-to-sport and return-to-learn as described in USA Hockey's Concussion Management Program found on this link:
[USA Hockey Concussion Management Program](#)
8. Written clearance from a qualified healthcare professional is required for an athlete to return to play ***without restriction*** (training, practice, or competition). The healthcare professional shall not be related in a familial way to the injured player. Only the **USA Hockey Return to Play Form¹** is acceptable.

¹ (**Note:** A qualified healthcare professional certainly may assist in setting up a graded return to sport based on everyone's case, but a **USA Hockey Return to Play Form** shall only be filled out and signed by all required individuals once an injured player is cleared to return ***without restriction.***)