



## TSSA Concussion Information and Signature Form for Coaches/Administrators

Public Chapter 148, effective January 1, 2014, requires that school and community organizations sponsoring youth athletic activities establish guidelines to inform and educate coaches, youth athletes and other adults involved in youth athletics about the nature, risk and symptoms of concussion/head injury.

### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

Concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth, causing the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull. This sudden movement of the brain can cause stretching and tearing of brain cells, damaging the cells and creating chemical changes in the brain.

### HOW CAN I RECOGNIZE A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION?

To help spot a concussion, you should watch for and ask others to report the following two things:

1. A forceful bump, blow or jolt to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.
2. Any concussion signs or symptoms such as a change in the athlete's behavior, thinking or physical functioning.

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION?

Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If an athlete reports one or more symptoms of concussion listed below after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body, s/he should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a **health care provider\*** says s/he is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play

#### Signs Observed By Coaching Staff

- Is confused about assignments or position
- Forgets Instruction
- Is Unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness, even briefly
- Shows mood, behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior/after to hit or fall

#### Symptoms Reported By Athletes

- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"



## CONCUSSION DANGER SIGNS

In rare cases; a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body if s/he exhibits any of the following danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other
- Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
- A headache that not only does not diminish, but gets worse
- Weakness, numbness or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless or agitated
- Has unusual behavior
- Loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

## WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT CONCUSSIONS?

Most athletes with a concussion will recover quickly and fully. But for some athletes, signs and symptoms of concussion can last for days, weeks or longer. If an athlete has a concussion, his or her brain needs time to heal. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first — usually within a short time period (hours, days, weeks) — can slow recovery or increase the chances for long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussion can result in brain swelling or permanent brain damage. It can even be fatal.

## HOW CAN I HELP ATHLETES TO RETURN TO PLAY GRADUALLY?

An athlete should return to sports practices under the supervision of an appropriate **health care provider\***. When available, be sure to work closely with your team's certified athletic trainer.

Below are five gradual steps you and the health care professional should follow to help safely return an athlete to play. Remember, this is a gradual process. These steps should not be completed in one day, but instead over days, weeks or months.

- **BASELINE:** Athletes should not have any concussion symptoms. Athletes should only progress to the next step if they do not have any symptoms at the current step.
- **STEP 1:** Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase an athlete's heart rate. This means about five to 10 minutes on an exercise bike, walking or light jogging. No weightlifting at this point.
- **STEP 2:** Continue with activities to increase an athlete's heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, moderate-intensity weightlifting (reduced time and/or reduced weight from your typical routine).
- **STEP 3:** Add heavy non-contact physical activity such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting routine and/or non-contact sport-specific drills (in three planes of movement).



- STEP 4: Athlete may return to practice and full contact (if appropriate for the sport) in controlled practice.
- STEP 5: Athlete may return to competition.

If an athlete's symptoms come back or she or he gets new symptoms when becoming more active at any step, this is a sign that the athlete is pushing himself or herself too hard. The athlete should stop these activities and the athlete's **health care provider\*** should be contacted. After more rest and no concussion symptoms, the athlete should begin the previous step.

## PREVENTION AND PREPARATION

Insist that safety comes first. To help minimize the risks for concussion or other serious brain injuries:

- Ensure athletes follow the rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.

Check with your league, school or district about concussion policies. Concussion policy statements can be developed to include:

- The school or league's commitment to safety
- A brief description of concussion
- Information on when athletes can safely return to school and play. Parents and athletes should sign the Parent Information and Signature Form at the beginning of the season.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED?

No matter whether the athlete is a key member of the team or the game is about to end, an athlete with a suspected concussion should be immediately removed from play. To help you know how to respond, follow the Heads Up four-step action plan:

1. REMOVE THE ATHLETE FROM PLAY.  
Look for signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. When in doubt, sit them out!
2. ENSURE THE ATHLETE IS EVALUATED BY AN APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
  - Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body
  - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long
  - Any memory loss immediately following the injury
  - Any seizures immediately following the injury
  - Number of previous concussions (if any)



3. INFORM THE ATHLETE'S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS. Let them know about the possible concussion and give them the Heads Up fact sheet for parents. This fact sheet can help parents monitor the athlete for signs or symptoms that appear or get worse once the athlete is at home or returns to school.
4. KEEP THE ATHLETE OUT OF PLAY. An athlete should be removed from play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health care provider\* says he or she is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. After you remove an athlete with a suspected concussion from practice or play, the decision about return to practice or play is a medical decision.

***\* Health care provider means a Tennessee licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician or a clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training.***



## Coach/Administrator Concussion Statement

	<b>Initials:</b>
I have read the concussion signs and symptoms on the Concussion Information Form for Coaches.	
<b>After Reading the Concussion Information Form for Coaches I am aware of the following information:</b>	
I should not allow any athlete exhibiting signs and symptoms consistent with concussion to return to play or practice on the same day.	
A concussion is a brain injury.	
A concussion cannot be "seen." Some symptoms might be present right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after an injury.	
If I suspect a student-athlete has a concussion, I am responsible for removing him/her from activity and referring him/her to a medical professional trained in concussion management.	
Athletes will need written permission from a <b>health care provider*</b> to return to play or practice after a concussion.	
Most concussions take days or weeks to get better. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.	
After a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body an athlete should receive immediate medical attention if there are any danger signs such as loss of consciousness, repeated vomiting or a headache that gets worse.	
After a concussion, the brain needs time to heal. I understand that I am/my child is much more likely to have another concussion or more serious brain injury if return to play or practice occurs before the concussion symptoms go away.	
In rare cases, repeat concussion can cause serious and long-lasting problems and even death.	

**\* Health care provider means a Tennessee licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician or a clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training.**

Signature of Coach/Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Coach/Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_