



WESTERN/PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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WPYFL CONCUSSION AND PROGRESSIVE RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOLS

The WPYFL understands the importance of proper recognition, treatment and rehabilitation from a concussion. The following protocols, endorsed by USA Football's Head's Up Program, regarding a player with a suspected concussion and return to play procedures will be followed by all teams that participate in the WPYFL.

REMOVAL FROM PLAY

If a concussion is suspected:

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Ensure the athlete is evaluated by a qualified health care provider.
3. Inform athlete's parents or guardians about a possible concussion.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until he is cleared by a qualified health care professional.

“WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT”

PROGRESSIVE RETURN TO PLAY

After written medical clearance is given by an appropriate medical professional the player may begin a graduated individualized progressive return to play protocol. The progressive return to play policy is as follows:

1. Light aerobic exercise only to increase heart rate: 5 to 10 minutes, light jog or exercise bike
2. Continued aerobic activity: moderate jogging, brief running, bike
3. Heavy non-contact activity: sprints, weights, non-contact football drills
4. Athlete returns to full contact controlled football practice
5. Return to play

Key points:

1. Only begin return to play protocol after athlete is symptom free.
2. Coaches must monitor for a return of symptoms at every stage.
3. Only one stage per day.
4. Move to the next stage if athlete remains symptom free for 24 hours following trial.
5. If symptoms reappear, stop activity and rest until symptoms subside.
6. The athlete can resume progression to play activities - **from step #1**, after symptom free for 24 hours.

The following protocols must be followed because there are many risks to premature return to play following a concussion including:

1. A greater risk for a second concussion due to a lower concussion threshold.
2. Second impact syndrome (abnormal brain blood flow that can result in death).
3. Exacerbation of any current symptoms
4. Increasing the risk of injury due to alteration in balance.

CONCUSSION SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The signs of a concussion include:

1. Appears dazed, stunned, or disoriented, demonstrates decreased alertness
2. Forgets plays, or demonstrates short term memory difficulty
3. Slurs words
4. Exhibits difficulties with balance or coordination.
5. Answers questions slowly or inaccurately.
6. Exhibits seizures or vomiting
7. Changes in level of consciousness. (Estimates are that <10% of concussions result in the loss of consciousness)

The symptoms of a concussion include:

1. Headache
2. Nausea
3. Balance problems or dizziness
4. Double vision or changes in vision
5. Sensitivity to light or sound/noise
6. Feeling sluggish or foggy
7. Difficulty with concentration and short term memory
8. Sleep disturbance
9. Irritability or changes in personality and behavior

***** All WPYFL coaches are required to maintain annual concussion certification*****