

New Concussion Guidelines for Athletes

These are the major points of the new concussion law:

- Each school will have a Concussion Oversight Team that will establish a return-to-play protocol.
- At every activity that carries a potential risk for concussion, there should be a designated individual who is responsible for identifying athletes with symptoms of concussion.
- Student shall be removed from practice or competition immediately if one of the following persons believes the student might have sustained a concussion: athletic trainer, coach, physician, medical professional or parent/legal guardian.
- Athlete will be evaluated by an appropriate health care professional as soon as practicable.
- Parent/guardian will be informed about the possible concussion and given information on concussion management.
- Athlete will not be allowed to return to participation that day regardless of how quickly the concussion signs/symptoms resolve and shall be kept from activity until a physician indicates they are symptom free and safe to return to play. A coach of an interscholastic athletics team may not authorize a student's return to play.
- Athlete must successfully complete each requirement of the school's return-to-play protocol.
- Treating physician must provide a written statement indicating that, in the physician's professional judgment; it is safe for the student to return to play.
- Athlete's parent/guardian acknowledges that the student has completed the requirements of the return-to-play protocol.
- A signed written statement from the physician and the parent/guardian is on file with the designated school official consenting for the return to play of the athlete before the athlete resumes activity.
- Following the Concussion Management Protocol, after clearance and compliance with the above information, supervised progression of activities should be initiated utilizing the now standardized protocol:
 - Student-athlete shall be symptom free for 24 hours prior to initiating the return to play progression.
 - Progress continues at 24-hour intervals as long as athlete is symptom free at each level.
 - If the athlete experiences any post-concussion symptoms during the return to activity progression, activity is discontinued and the athlete must be re-evaluated by a licensed health care professional.

Phase 1:

- No exertional physical activity until athlete is symptom free for 24 hours and receives written clearance from a physician and submission of the required documentation following the concussion injury.

Phase 2:

- Step 1. When the athlete completes Phase 1, begin light aerobic exercise – 5 – 10 minutes on an exercise bike, or light jog; no weight lifting, resistance training, or any other exercise.
 - Step 2. Moderate aerobic exercise - 15 to 20 minutes of running at moderate intensity without a helmet or other equipment.
 - Step 3. Non-contact training drills in full uniform. May begin weight lifting, resistance training, and other exercises.
 - Step 4. Full contact practice or training.
 - Step 5. Full game play.
- There is a possibility the athlete may need academic modifications following a concussion. It may be necessary for individuals with concussion to have both cognitive and physical rest in order to achieve maximum recovery in shortest period of time. In addition to the physical management noted above, it is recommended that the following be considered:
 - Notify school nurse and all teachers regarding the athlete's condition.
 - Advise teachers of post-concussion symptoms.
 - Student may need special accommodations regarding academic requirements (such as limited computer work, reading activities, testing, assistance to class, etc.) until concussion symptoms resolve.
 - Student may only be able to attend school for half days or may need daily rest periods until symptoms subside. In special circumstances the student may require homebound status for a brief period.