

# **Bureau Valley School District 340 Return to Play after a Concussion Protocol**

## **Summary**

Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

## **Definition of a Concussion**

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. An athlete does not have to lose consciousness (be “knocked out”) to have suffered a concussion.

## **Behavior or Signs Observed Indicative of a Possible Concussion**

- Loss of consciousness
- Appears dazed or stunned
- Appears confused
- Forgets plays
- Unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to or after the injury

## **Symptoms Reported by a Player Indicative of a Possible Concussion**

- Headache
- Nausea
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish
- Feeling foggy or groggy

- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion

### **Protocol**

This protocol is intended to provide the mechanics to follow during the course of contests/matches/events when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion. For the purposes of this policy, appropriate health care professionals are defined as: physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers.

1. During the pre-game conference of coaches and officials, the official shall remind the head coaches that a school-approved appropriate health care professional will need to clear for return to play any athlete removed from a contest for an apparent head injury.
2. The officials will have no role in determining concussion other than the obvious situation where a player is unconscious or apparently unconscious as is provided for under the previous rule. Officials will merely point out to a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise the coach that the player should be examined by the school-approved health care provider.
3. If it is confirmed by the school's approved health care professional that the student did not sustain a concussion, the head coach may so advise the officials during an appropriate stoppage of play and the athlete may re-enter competition pursuant to the contest rules.
4. Otherwise, if an athlete cannot be cleared to return to play by a school-approved health care professional as defined in this protocol, that athlete may not be returned to competition that day and is then subject to the IESA's/IHSA's Return to Play (RTP) Policy before the student-athlete can return to practice or competition.

***The Return-to-Play Policy of the IESA and IHSA requires athletes to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest.***

5. Following the contest, a report shall be filed by the contest's coaches and shared with the IESA/IHSA Office through the Officials Center if necessary.
6. In cases where an assigned IESA/IHSA state finals event medical professional is present, his/her decision to not allow an athlete to return to competition may not be over-ruled.

### **What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?**

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a

period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences.

**If you think your child has suffered a concussion**

You should also inform your child’s coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it’s better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

**Student/Parent Consent and Acknowledgements**

By signing this form, we acknowledge we have been provided information regarding concussions.

**Student Signature**

Student Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature**

Parent or Legal Guardian Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student \_\_\_\_\_