

# CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MSHSL ATHLETES

## Acute injury

When a player shows any symptoms or signs of a concussion, the following should be applied.

1. The player should not be allowed to return to play in the current game or practice.
2. The player should not be left alone, and regular monitoring for deterioration is essential over the initial few hours after injury.
3. The player should be medically evaluated after the injury.
4. Return to play must follow a medically supervised stepwise process.

A player should never return to play while symptomatic. "When in doubt, sit them out!"

## Return to play protocol

Return-to-play following a concussion requires resolution of all symptoms and completion of a stepwise exercise protocol. Each step requires a minimum of 24 hours. If any symptoms or signs recur, the player should drop back to the previous level.

The athlete may return to practice and competition only when: 1) free of all signs and symptoms at rest and during exercise, 2) completed the stepwise exercise protocol and 3) returned to school for full days.

Steps required to return to play after a concussion:

1. Sub threshold symptom during regular activities of daily living and school.
2. Light aerobic exercise such as walking or stationary cycling, no resistance training.
3. Sport specific exercise—for example, skating in hockey, running in soccer; progressive addition of resistance training at steps 3 or 4.
4. Non-contact training drills.
5. Full contact training.
6. Game play.

The final return to competition decision is based on clinical judgment and the athlete may return only with written permission from a health care provider who is registered, licensed, certified, or otherwise statutorily authorized by the state to provide medical treatment; is trained and experienced in evaluating and managing concussions; and is practicing within the person's medical training and scope of practice.

Neuropsychological testing or balance testing may help with the return to play decision and may be used after the player is symptom free, but the tests are not required for the symptom free player to return to play.

For more information, please refer to the references listed below.

## Signs Observed by Coaching Staff

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| • Appears dazed and stunned                | • Is confused about assignment or position |
| • Forgets sports plays                     | • Is unsure of game, score, or opponent    |
| • Moves clumsily                           | • Answers questions slowly                 |
| • Loses consciousness (even briefly)       | • Shows behavior or personality changes    |
| • Can't recall events prior to hit or fall | • Can't recall events after hit or fall    |

## Symptoms Reported by Athlete

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|--|------------------------------------|
| • Headache or "pressure" in head           | • Nausea or vomiting               |
| • Balance problems or dizziness            | • Double or blurry vision          |
| • Sensitivity to light                     | • Sensitivity to noise             |
| • Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy | • Concentration or memory problems |
| • Confusion                                | • Does not "feel right"            |

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