

# Clifton Girls' Softball League Concussion Policy and Guidelines for Return to Competition

Adopted by the Clifton girls' Softball League Executive Board on 3/9/16

All those involved in the league in some capacity follow the following concussion guidelines.

## What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that temporarily disrupts normal function of the brain. A concussion occurs from a blow to the head but can also occur to an indirect blow elsewhere on the body. Concussions range from mild to severe depending on the severity and length of symptoms. Regardless of the severity, a concussion is an injury to the brain and therefore must be taken very seriously.

A Concussion is medically defined as a complex of pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by traumatic, biomechanical forces.

- It may be caused by either a direct blow to the head, neck, face, or elsewhere on the body that causes an "impulsive" force transmitted to the head.
- typically results in rapid onset of short lived impairment of neurologic function that resolves spontaneously.
- It may result in neuropathological changes, but acute clinical symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than a structural one.
- Results in graded set of clinical symptoms that may or may not involve loss of consciousness. Resolution of clinical and cognitive typically follows a sequential course; however, it is important to note that in a small percentage of cases, post-concussive symptoms may be prolonged.
- No abnormality on standard structural neuroimaging is seen in concussion.

*Zurich Consensus Statement 2008 Clin J Sports Med 2009; 19(3)185-195*

Every year, 1- 3 million concussions are reported in athletics. Some experts believe the incidence of concussion may actually be 10x that number as many go unreported.

Most concussions are transient and symptoms usually resolve in 7-10 days. It is thought that 10-15% of concussions can have lingering results and result in post concussive syndrome which may last weeks, months or years. Females seem to have a higher incidence of concussion and experts can't agree on how many concussions are too many.

## Did You Know?

Rest is the key to a successful recovery. You should not return to an active lifestyle (sports, exercise, etc) until symptoms have completely resolved. It is also important to limit activities that require a lot of thinking or concentration as this may worsen your symptoms and delay recovery time. Once symptoms have completely subsided, a gradual return to physical activity as well as work or school will ensure that you make a full recovery without complications!

To ensure that your injury is treated properly, a student-athlete who sustains or is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other brain injury while engaged in a sports competition or practice shall be immediately removed from the sports competition or practice in accordance with the school district's written policy. A student-athlete who is removed from competition or practice shall not participate in further sports activity until he is evaluated by a physician trained or a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions, and receives written clearance from a physician to return to competition or practice.

## Signs Observed by Others

- Appears dazed/ stunned or a vacant stare
- Is confused about assignments
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of date or where they are
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to the hit
- Can't recall events after the hit

## Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache
- Nausea
- Visual problems
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Ringing in ears
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or tired
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Sleep disturbances

## Risks of Playing with a Concussion

Regardless of the severity, a concussion is an injury to the brain that must be taken seriously. The risk of returning to play too early may result in:

### 1. Post Concussion Syndrome

a neurologic disorder in which the signs and symptoms of the concussion, such as headaches, dizziness, or difficulty concentrating persists for weeks, months, or even years.

### 2. Second Impact Syndrome

a life-threatening neurologic disorder. Second Impact Syndrome can occur when an athlete sustains another blow to the head while the athlete is still symptomatic of a concussion. This second blow (or impact) causes the brain to lose its ability to regulate blood flow properly. Blood vessels become engorged and swell up, which places excessive pressure on the brain. This pressure may result in rapid respiratory failure, coma, and even death. If death does not occur, the chances of returning to normal are very unlikely. Most people who survive from this have some form of an impairment or life-long disability.

In order to minimize the risk, a student-athlete who sustains or is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other brain injury while engaged in a sports competition or practice shall be immediately removed from the sports competition or practice in accordance with the school district's written policy. A student-athlete who is removed from competition or practice shall not participate in further sports activity until he is evaluated by a physician or a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions, and receives written clearance from a physician to return to competition or practice.

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## **What to do when a Concussion Occurs**

The following is the policy of what coaches and managers are to do when a player experiences any signs, symptoms or behaviors of a head injury. (see previous page)

**\*\*\* Please note the duration of the signs, symptoms and behaviors do not matter\*\*\***

- The player is to be immediately removed for competition (practice or game)
- When in doubt sit them out
- Notify the parent or guardian immediately
- Notify the parent that they should notify their child's school nurse.
- Notify the parent that the player will not be able to return to play without a clearance note from a physician (MD/DO).
- Once the clearance note is received from the parent the note must be given to a safety coordinator in a timely fashion so record of the clearance can be kept on file with the league.

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## **Concussion Education**

### **Players/Parents:**

The following links can be provided to players and parents as resources for concussion information:

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/high\\_school.html#3](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/high_school.html#3)

<https://www.sportsafetyinternational.org/>

### **Coaches:**

Coaches are required to take concussion education training.

Educational training can be found at the following link: <https://www.sportsafetyinternational.org/coaches/>