



SAULT MAJOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Concussion Policy

Hockey Canada believes that the safety and health of minor hockey players is of paramount importance. The Sault Major Hockey Association adheres to the Concussion Policy (5.11.7) as set out by Hockey Canada including the Hockey Canada Six – Step method for return to play for Concussion in sport, and has incorporated the Position paper on Concussions as set out by the Ontario Hockey Federation.

1: Identifying a suspected concussion and removal from play

- a) **What is a concussion?** A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a blow to the head or to another part of the body that causes the brain to move inside the skull.

All players who experience any concussion signs and symptoms (*Figure 1*) following a blow to the head or another part of the body is considered to have a suspected concussion and must stop participation in the hockey activity immediately.

- b) **A suspected concussion can be identified in three ways:**

- i. Self-reported signs and symptoms – Even if only one symptom (*Figure 1*)
- ii. Observed signs and symptoms from the team officials
- iii. Peer-reported signs and symptoms from players, parents, and/or team officials

- c) **Who is responsible for removal from play?**

If a suspected concussion occurs, it is the responsibility of all team officials (coach, assistant coach, trainer, assistant trainer, manager, assistant manager or executive member) to remove the player from participation in the hockey activity immediately. The team Trainer is the first point of contact with the injured player and will evaluate the player in question, using appropriate protocols and will make a determination based on their assessment of the player. If the trainer determines that the player may be concussed or is showing symptoms of a possible concussion then they **WILL** deem that player unfit to play until assessed by a medical doctor. No player can return to play until an attending Physician has given the player clearance to do so in writing.

The trainer's decision is final and cannot be overturned by the Coaching staff or the Parents until the above mentioned criteria has been met.

If there is doubt whether a concussion has occurred, it is to be assumed that it has. If in doubt, sit them out.

* A player may show any one or more of these signs or symptoms

Figure 1: GENERAL CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS

Headache	Feeling mentally foggy	Sensitive to light
Nausea	Feeling slowed down	Sensitive to noise
Dizziness	Difficulty concentrating	Irritability
Vomiting	Difficulty remembering	Sadness
Visual problems	Drowsiness	Nervous/anxious
Balance problems	Sleeping more/less than usual	More emotional
Numbness/tingling	Trouble falling asleep	Fatigue



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***If a player experiences a sudden onset of any of the “red flag symptoms”. 911 should be called immediately.**

Figure 2: RED FLAG SYMPTOMS	
Headaches that worsen	Can't recognize people or places
Seizures or convulsion	Increasing confusion or irritability
Repeated vomiting	Weakness/tingling/burning in arms or legs
Loss of consciousness	Persistent or increasing neck pain
Looks very drowsy/can't be awakened	Unusual behavioural change
Slurred speech	Focal neurologic signs (e.g. paralysis, weakness,

2: Monitoring the player, and recommend seeing a medical professional:

Team trainers are responsible to monitor the player with a suspected concussion until a parent/guardian is contacted or on-site. Player must be removed from the bench area to the dressing room. Team trainers should recommend to the individual's parent or guardian that they seek medical attention immediately, especially if the concussion occurred in any form of hockey activity.

**If no team trainer is present, the order of next most responsible individuals:*

- i. An individual with trainer certification
- ii. Team head coach

3. When a player is diagnosed by a medical doctor as having a concussion, the individual must stop participation in all hockey activities immediately.
4. The participant is not permitted to return to any hockey activity until written permission is given by a **medical doctor**.

**** Note** - Return to full participation shall follow the adopted Hockey Canada Safety Program return to play guidelines outlined below.

5. A copy of such documentation **MUST** be submitted to the governing body and/or the Team Safety Person or trainer as determined in the Branch policy, prior to the participants return to any hockey activity.



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RECOMMENDED RETURN TO PLAY FRAMEWORK

The return to play process is gradual, and begins after a medical doctor has given the player clearance to return to activity. If any symptoms/signs return during this process, the player must be re-evaluated by a Medical physician. No return to play if any symptoms or signs persist. Doctor's clearance must be submitted to your governing hockey body or the Team Trainer/Safety Person as per Branch policy.

Step 1: No activity, only complete rest. Proceed to step 2 only when symptoms are gone.

Step 2: Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling. Monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting.

Step 3: Sport specific activities and training (e.g. skating). The player will be supervised by the team trainer for a skating session only. Concussed player will wear a safety vest or pinnie identifying him or her as a concussed player that cannot participate in any contact.

Step 4: Drills without body contact. May add light resistance training and progress to heavier weights. The time needed to progress from non-contact to contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and the player. The player will again wear the safety vest or pinnie identifying the player as concussed.

Go to step 5 after medical clearance (reassessment and note to be submitted to your team's staff or your governing body as per Branch policy).

Step 5: Begin drills with body contact.

Step 6: Game play.

**** Each step should take at least one day.**

If symptoms or signs return, the player should return to the previous step, and be re-evaluated by a physician

Hockey Canada / Parachute

Concussion Education and Awareness Program

Concussion in Sport

All players who experience a concussion must be seen by a physician as soon as possible. A concussion is a brain injury.

A concussion most often occurs without a loss of consciousness. However, a concussion may involve loss of consciousness.

How Concussions Happen

Any blow to the head, face, or neck or a blow to the body which causes a sudden jarring of the head and results in the brain knocking against the skull may cause a concussion.

Common Symptoms and Signs of Concussion

Symptoms and signs may have a delayed onset (may be worse later that day or even the next morning), so players should continue to be observed even after the initial symptoms and signs have returned to normal.

***A player may show any one or more of these symptoms or signs**

Symptoms

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Feeling dazed
- Seeing stars
- Sensitivity to light
- Ringing in ears
- Tiredness
- Nausea, vomiting
- Irritability
- Confusion, disorientation

Signs

- Poor balance or coordination
- Slow or slurred speech
- Poor concentration
- Delayed responses to questions
- Vacant stare
- Decreased playing ability
- Unusual emotions, personality change, and inappropriate behaviour
- Sleep disturbance

For a complete list of symptoms and signs, visit www.parachutecanada.org

Caution

All players must consult a physician when a concussion is suspected. Coaches, trainers/safety people, players and parents should not attempt to treat a concussion without a physician's involvement.

Initial Response to Loss of Consciousness

If there is loss of consciousness – Initiate Emergency Action Plan and call an ambulance. Assume possible neck injury. Continue to monitor airway, breathing and circulation.

Concussion – Key Steps

- Remove the player from the current game or practice
- Do not leave the player alone; monitor symptoms and signs
- Do not administer medication
- Inform the coach, parent or guardian about the injury
- The player should be evaluated by a medical doctor as soon as possible
- The player must not return to play in that game or practice, and must follow the 6-step return to play protocol



6 Step Return to Play

The return to play process is gradual, and begins after a doctor has given the player clearance to return to activity. If any symptoms/signs return during this process, the player must be re-evaluated by a physician. No return to play if any symptoms or signs persist. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, not necessarily when exercising!

Step 1: No activity, only complete mental and physical rest. Proceed to step 2 only when all symptoms are gone. This includes avoiding both mental and physical stress.

Step 2: Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling. Monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting.

Step 3: Sport specific activities and training (e.g. skating).

Step 4: Drills without body contact. May add light resistance training and progress to heavier weights.

The time needed to progress from non-contact to contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and the player. Go to step 5 after medical clearance. (reassessment and written note)

Step 5: Begin drills with body contact.

Step 6: Game play. (The earliest a concussed athlete should return to play is one week).

Note: Players should proceed through return to play steps only when they do not experience symptoms or signs and the physician has given clearance. Each step should be a minimum of one day. If symptoms or signs return, the player should return to step 1, and be re-evaluated by a physician.

Never return to play if symptoms persist!

Prevention Tips

Players

- Make sure your helmet fits snugly and that the strap is fastened
- Get a custom fitted mouth guard
- Respect other players
- No hits to the head
- No hits from behind
- Strong skill development

Coach/Trainer/Safety Person/Referee

- Eliminate all checks to the head
- Eliminate all hits from behind
- Recognize symptoms and signs of concussion
- Inform and educate players about the risks of concussion

Education Tips

www.hockeycanada.ca

See Smart Hockey Program at

www.parachutecanada.org

Dr. Tom Pashby Sport Safety Fund website

www.drpushby.ca

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