



North Dakota High School Activities Association Concussion Management Procedure



Due to the increased focus on minimizing the risk for athletes exhibiting signs, symptoms and behaviors of a concussion, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) has placed the following language in all sports rule books beginning in 2010-11:

“An 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 [that day] until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.”

It is highly recommended that every coach, official, student-athlete and parent should successfully complete the 20 minute NFHS online course **“Concussion in Sports—What You Need to Know”**. The course can be accessed at: www.nfhslearn.com

In response to North Dakota legislation passed in 2011, the NDHSAA Board of Directors recommends the following procedures.

Role of contest officials in administering the new rule change

NDHSAA Registered Officials are required to review and know the signs and symptoms of a concussion. They are to immediately remove any athlete who displays the following signs or symptoms from the contest. Registered officials will receive concussion training through the on-line rules process.

- Headache
- Fogginess
- Difficulty concentrating
- Easily confused
- Slowed thought process
- Difficulty with memory
- Nausea
- Lack of energy, tiredness
- Dizziness, poor balance
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light and sounds
- Mood changes—irritable, anxious or tearful

Only an Appropriate Health Care Professional (AHCP) can determine if an athlete has had a concussion.

- An Appropriate Health Care Professional is empowered to determine whether an athlete has received a concussion.
 - An AHCP is defined as a licensed, registered or certified health care provider whose scope of practice includes the recognition of concussion signs and symptoms.
- If the event continues over multiple days, the designated event AHCP has ultimate authority regarding any return to play decision during the event.

Procedure to follow if an official removes an athlete and the AHCP has determined the athlete does not have a concussion

- If it is confirmed by the AHCP that the athlete was removed from competition but did not sustain a concussion, the athlete may practice and compete as per school policy.

Procedure regarding an authorization to return to practice/competition in the sport:

- Once a concussion has been diagnosed by an AHCP, only an AHCP can authorize a subsequent return to play.
 - The clearance must be in writing and provided to student or parent who in turn must provide to the school;
 - The clearance may not be on the same date on which the athlete was removed from play.
- It is recommended that school administration notify the coach when an athlete has permission to return to play.

In the event a Transfer of Care form has not been previously filed with event management, school /NDHSAA designated AHCP medical providers shall not have their decision regarding an athlete’s ability to return to competition overruled by any other AHCP.

NFHS suggested Concussion Management Guidelines for Health Care Professionals if the athlete has received a concussion of the day of competition.

- No athlete should Return to Play (RTP) or practice on the same day of a concussion.
- Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an AHCP that day.
- Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an AHCP prior to resuming participation in practice or competition.
- After medical clearance, RTP should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP based upon the return of any signs or symptoms.

WHEN IN DOUBT...SIT THEM OUT