



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

To implement this rule change, the NDHSAA Medical Advisory Committee has recommended the following procedures, which have been approved by the NDHSAA Board of Directors:

Role of contest officials in administering the new rule change

Officials are encouraged to review and know the signs and symptoms of a concussion and immediately remove any athlete who displays the following signs or symptoms from the contest.

- 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 and 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.
 - Member schools shall determine their AHCP. AHCP is defined as a medical professional functioning within the levels of their medical education, medical training, and medical licensure.
- If it is determined that an athlete has a concussion, that decision is final and the athlete must be removed from all competition for the remainder of that day.
- 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 school’s designated AHCP that the athlete was removed from competition but did not sustain a concussion, the head coach may so advise the officials during an appropriate stoppage of play, and the athlete may reenter competition pursuant to the contest rules.

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;
 - 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