

## Attachment A.

### School of Sport Education NT Protocols for Concussion Management

The School of Sport Education NT adheres to the recommendations and guidelines of Sports Medicine Australia's Concussion in Sport Policy (v1.0 January 2018). Under this policy, any athlete with a suspected concussion should be removed from play immediately.

These protocols are to assist athletes, officials, and teachers, parents in management of head injuries and are not intended to replace medical assessment and treatment.

#### What is Concussion?

Disturbance in brain function caused by direct or indirect force to the head. Concussion results in a variety of signs and symptoms, some are very subtle, and most do not result in a loss of consciousness. Rest followed by gradual return to play is the main treatment.

#### Practice and Game Day Management

1. **Recognise.** A potential head injury or concussion must be acknowledged if an athlete has any signs, symptoms or fails to answer any of the memory questions (Concussion Recognition Tool 5) ) after a head or body collision.
2. **Remove.** Any athlete with signs or symptoms of a potential head injury or concussion must be removed from play immediately and must not return to play or training that day. Always adhere to the first aid rules, including airway, breathing, circulation and spinal immobilisation particularly for the unconscious and suspected spinal injuries.
3. **Rest.** If there was an observable knock to the head, the athlete must be taken through the concussion assessment and even if no other signs or symptoms are present the athlete have a mandatory minimum 24 hour rest. The Head Injury Factsheet must be given to the athlete, parent or guardian. An absence of signs or symptoms is not a reliable indicator, as signs and symptoms may emerge up to 48 hours after the impact.
4. **Refer.** All players with a potential head injury or suspected concussion need a medical assessment by a registered medical doctor as soon as possible. If there are any doubts about the athlete or red flags call an ambulance or refer to the emergency department. The Head Injury Factsheet and Head Injury Recognition and Referral Form should be given to the athlete or family member/guardian. The latter should be returned once signed by the medical doctor.

#### Follow Up Management

The rest and return to play guidelines of the Sporting Body must be followed, if none then the following will be used as the minimum.

5. **Rest.** Cognitive and physical rest is crucial to recover from concussion. The minimum rest for adults is 24 hours while children and adolescents require a longer rest time. The rest period may be longer if symptoms take longer to resolve.
6. **Return.** Athletes should not return to sport until they have a medical clearance and returned to normal daily living without signs or symptoms of concussion. Return to sport should be in a graduated manner and supervised by their medical practitioner. This is a six step process with a minimum 24 hours between each stage, if a player becomes symptomatic at any stage they should drop back to the previous symptom free level and try to progress again after 24 hours. An athlete can only return to full training and playing when they have fully recovered, children should not be permitted to return to unrestricted sport in fewer than 7 days after symptoms have resolved.

Most concussions resolve in 10-14 days, if still symptomatic refer back to their doctor.

**Sources**

Sports Medicine Australia 2018, Concussion in Sport Policy, Sports Medicine Australia

Elkington, L, Manzanero, S & Hughes, D 2017, Australian Institute of Sport and Australian Medical Association Concussion in Sport Position Statement, Australian Sports Commission,