Concussion Return to Play Protocol

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a neurologic injury which causes a temporary disturbance in brain cells that comes from and is the result of an extreme acceleration or deceleration of the brain within the skull. The common misconception is that you must be hit in the head to cause a concussion injury – this is not true! Because a concussion is the result of acceleration or deceleration of the brain, a concussion can happen with a significant blow to anywhere on the body, provided sufficient acceleration/deceleration is transmitted to the brain tissue, head or face, there may be no other visible signs of a brain injury. It can cause changes in the brain that may not be seen in a CT scan or X-Ray. Balance, reaction time and cognitive skills can also be impacted.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

Symptoms of a concussion range from mild to severe and can last for or appear within hours, days, weeks, or even months. In some cases, there may be no symptoms at all. If you suspect a concussion, or notice any of the symptoms listed below, contact your doctor immediately. In severe cases, proceed to an Urgent Care Centre or Emergency Room immediately.

Visible Symptoms

- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Loss of motion/slow to rise
- Unsteady on feet/balance issues
- Grabbing/clutching head
- Dazed, vacant or blank look
- Vomiting
- Disoriented
- Bleeding from nose/ears
- Sensitivity to light
- Unequal pupils (eye)
- Seizures or convulsions
- Deteriorating conscious state

Non-Visible Symptoms

- Confusion/disorientation
- Complaints of pain / headache
- Complaints of dizziness / nausea
- Complaints of fuzzy / blurred vision
- Inability to concentrate
- Easily upset / angered (emotional)
- Nervous/anxious
- Tired/sleeping more or less than usual
- Complaints of tingling/burning feeling in arms & legs
- Trouble falling asleep
- Memory loss – unable to remember events leading up to incident

* Please note that complaints of neck pain should be addressed immediately as a head injury may also result in a neck / spinal injury

RYFC Emergency Protocol – Suspected Player Concussion

A player showing any signs/symptoms as listed on the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool or as listed in this document must be removed from play immediately. All Coaches/Trainers are required to be familiar with the use of this tool and follow the Club's protocol without question. The player is not to re-enter the game or practice.

- In the event of a loss of consciousness call 911 for assistance immediately. Do not move the player unless absolutely necessary for safety reasons.
- Ensure that a member of the team staff stays with the player.
- Notify any family members immediately if they are present.
- The player must be evaluated by a physician prior to returning to play. Documentation from the physician is required. Average recovery period is 10 -14 days, but can sometimes be longer.
- Graduated "Return to Play process" as per Zurich Concussion guidelines (2012).
- Coaches must complete required injury report and submit to Royal York Football Club within 24 hours of the incident.

RYFC Return to Play Stages Protocol

This is a multi-part process that requires supervision from the player's health care provider at each stage.

1. Limited activity - Physical and cognitive rest
2. Light aerobic exercise - Walking, swimming, cycling
3. Sport specific exercise - Light running skills, no heading

4. Non contact training drills - Passing / movement
5. Full contact practice - Normal training cycle
6. Return to play - Normal game play

*A minimum of 24 hrs is required between each stage.

Any recurrence of symptoms requires the player to return to the previous level. RYFC Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Managers and Trainers are not authorized to oversee Return to Play processes.

Base Line Testing

Many soccer clubs recommend that players involved in competitive programs undergo Base Line Testing prior to the beginning of the outdoor season. This should be done in a controlled environment under the supervision of an approved concussion testing facility.

Caution

The Royal York Football Club is committed to providing a safe environment for all players regardless of age and gender. It is, however, ultimately the responsibility of the parent to ensure that appropriate professional care is provided to players under the age of 18 in the event of injury. In the event of a concussion diagnosis, premature return to play can result in serious and sometimes permanent injury, particularly in the event of a second impact. Parents should seek ongoing medical evaluation for the benefit of the player's long-term health and safety.

Approved Concussion Testing Facilities

High Point Wellness Centre
Dr. Dwight Chapin
5110 Creekbank Rd., Suite 700 Mississauga, ON L4W 0A1
905.624.0233

LiveActive Sport Medicine Health and Performance
Dr. Kathleen Bates
400 Kipling Ave., MasterCard Center Etobicoke, ON M8V 3L1
905.829.2827

The Sports Clinic University of Toronto
Dr. Chris Woollam 3359, Mississauga Road North, Mississauga, Ontario, L5L 1J7
905.829.9292