



## 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](http://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 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.
  - 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**