



GHSA CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

BY-LAW 2.68

GHSA CONCUSSION POLICY: In accordance with Georgia law and national playing rules published by the NFHS, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest and shall not return to play until an appropriate health care professional has determined that no concussion has occurred.

OVERT SIGNS OF POSSIBLE CONCUSSION

- ❖ Player loses consciousness
- ❖ Player appears dazed or stunned
 - ❖ Player confused about assignments
 - ❖ Is unsure of score, opponent, etc.
- ❖ Can't recall events before/after hit
- ❖ Moves clumsily; experiences dizziness
- ❖ Shows personality/behavior changes
- ❖ Unusual sensitivity to lights and sounds
- ❖ Experiences nausea and headache

SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

- ❖ Headache and/or nausea after head trauma
- ❖ Balance and/or vision problems
 - ❖ dizziness; double vision
 - ❖ severe sensitivity to light and sound
- ❖ Cognitive processing problems
 - ❖ Lessened concentration or memory
 - ❖ Physical sluggishness with confusion about present situation

MEDICAL EVALUATION

- ❖ Neither officials, nor coaches, are expected to “diagnose” a concussion, as that is the job of an appropriate health-care professional
- ❖ The official is not responsible for the sideline evaluation or management of the athlete after he or she is removed from play
- ❖ These evaluations are to be done by “appropriate medical professionals”.

Appropriate Health Care Professional

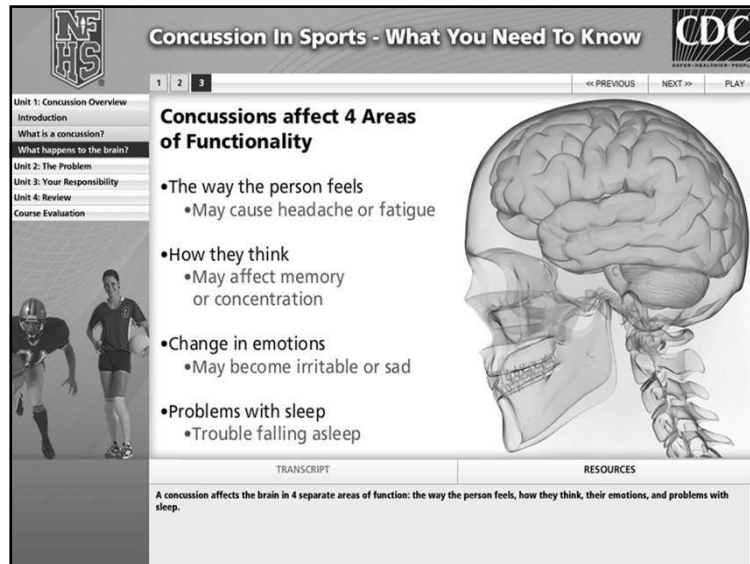
- Must have received training in concussion evaluation and management
- Licensed Physician (MD/DO)
- Certified Athletic Trainer
- A licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician,
 - Nurse Practitioner
 - Physician Assistant

GAME/PRACTICE PROTOCOL

- No athlete is allowed to return to a game or a practice on the same day that a concussion
 - has been diagnosed,
 - OR cannot be ruled out.
- Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion must be cleared medically by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in any future practice or contest.
- The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol shall be a part of the medical clearance for future return to play.
- An second head injury before the brain has had time to heal can increase damage to the brain.

EDUCATIONAL PROTOCOL

- *It is mandatory that every coach in each GHSA sport participate in a free, online course on concussion management prepared by the NFHS and available at www.nfhslearn.com at least every two years – beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.*
- *Each school will be responsible for monitoring the participation of its coaches in the concussion management course, and shall keep a record of those who participate.*



Concussion In Sports - What You Need To Know

Unit 1: Concussion Overview
Introduction
What is a concussion?
What happens to the brain?
Unit 2: The Problem
Unit 3: Your Responsibility
Unit 4: Review
Course Evaluation

Concussions affect 4 Areas of Functionality

- The way the person feels
 - May cause headache or fatigue
- How they think
 - May affect memory or concentration
- Change in emotions
 - May become irritable or sad
- Problems with sleep
 - Trouble falling asleep

TRANSCRIPT RESOURCES

A concussion affects the brain in 4 separate areas of function: the way the person feels, how they think, their emotions, and problems with sleep.

ACCESSING COURSE

- Go to www.nfhslearn.com
- Click on **“Courses”** at the top of the home page
- Go to the column entitled **“Free Courses”**
- Click on **“Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know”**
- Be certain to print out the completion form at the end of the presentation so your school Athletic Director can track the compliance of all coaches.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROTOCOL

- Distribute to every athlete and his/her parent/guardian an information sheet that includes:
 - the dangers of concussion injuries,
 - the signs/symptoms of concussion
 - and the concussion management protocol outlined in this by-law.
- This sheet must be signed by the parent/guardian of each athlete.
- This form is available at www.ghsa.net among the forms included in the **“Resources”** section.

GHSA FORM – PART A

STUDENT/PARENT CONCUSSION AWARENESS FORM

SCHOOL: _____

DANGERS OF CONCUSSION

Concussions at all levels of sports have received a great deal of attention and a state law has been passed to address this issue. Adolescent athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussion. Once considered little more than a minor “ding” to the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in death, or changes in brain function (either short-term or long-term). A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. Continued participation in any sport following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as well as increased risk for further injury to the brain, and even death.

Player and parental education in this area is crucial – that is the reason for this document. Refer to it regularly. This form must be signed by a parent or guardian of each student who wishes to participate in GHSA athletics. One copy needs to be returned to the school, and one retained at home.

GHSA FORM – PART B

- **COMMON SIGNS /SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION**
- ❖ Headache, dizziness, poor balance, moves clumsily, reduced energy level/tiredness
- ❖ Nausea or vomiting
- ❖ Blurred vision, sensitivity to light and sounds
- ❖ Fogginess of memory, difficulty concentrating, slowed thought processes, confused about surroundings or game assignments
- ❖ Unexplained changes in behavior and personality
- ❖ Loss of consciousness (NOTE: This does not occur in all concussion episodes.)

GHSA FORM – PART C

BY-LAW 2.68: GHSA CONCUSSION POLICY: In accordance with Georgia law and national playing rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest and shall not return to play until an appropriate health care professional has determined that no concussion has occurred. (NOTE: An appropriate health care professional may include, licensed physician (MD/DO) or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and management.)

No athlete is allowed to return to a game or a practice on the same day that a concussion (a) has been diagnosed, OR (b) cannot be ruled out.

Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion shall be cleared medically by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in any future practice or contest. The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol shall be a part of the medical clearance.

It is mandatory that every coach in each GHSA sport participate in a free, online course on concussion management prepared by the NFHS and available at www.nfhslearn.com at least every two years – beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

Each school will be responsible for monitoring the participation of its coaches in the concussion management course, and shall keep a record of those who participate.

I HAVE READ THIS FORM AND I UNDERSTAND THE FACTS PRESENTED IN IT.

SIGNED: _____ (Student) _____ (Parent or Guardian)

DATE: _____