



Basketball Nova Scotia Concussion Protocol

Canada Basketball and its Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations understand that having a concussion policy is crucial to the health and wellness of their athletes. Through the amalgamation of concussion research completed by the Think First Foundation, the Concussion in Sport Group and the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Canada Basketball recommends this "Return to Play Protocol" before an athlete is allowed to return to both training and competition.

Health and wellness of young athletes is imperative and CB AND PTSO'S strongly recommends that all athletes who receive any sort of injury, especially to the head, seek medical attention immediately. This Return to Play Protocol is ONLY a recommendation. The top priority is always to seek a medical opinion.

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that is caused by a bump or blow to the head. It can change the way the brain normally works. It can occur during practices or games in any sport. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be potentially serious. A concussion can happen even if the athlete has not been rendered unconscious. Concussions cannot be seen. Signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If an athlete reports any symptoms of concussion, they seek medical attention immediately.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

If the athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following symptoms:

- Headache or "pressure" in the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Light sensitivity
- Noise sensitivity
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Irritability
- Neck pain

- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Sadness
- Not “feeling right”

SYMPTOMS PARENTS/GUARDIANS MAY NOTICE

After an athlete sustains a concussion, any individual may notice that the athlete:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Unable to recall events prior to or after being hit
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Appears more emotional

WHAT SHOULD AN ATHLETE DO IF THEY THINK THEY HAVE A CONCUSSION?

- Inform their coach(es) and parents/guardian immediately. Never ignore a bump or blow to the head, even if the athlete feels fine. Also, notify the coach if a teammate might have a concussion. Inform the coach about any recent concussion in ANY sport or activity. The athlete’s coach may not know about a concussion the athlete received in another sport or activity, unless the coach has been updated on the athlete’s condition.
- Seek medical attention immediately. A doctor or healthcare professional can tell if a concussion has been sustained, its severity, and when the athlete is OK to return to play.
- Allow the athlete time to heal. If the athlete has had a concussion, their brain needs time to heal. While their brain is still healing, they are much more likely to have a second concussion. Repeated concussions can cause damage to the brain. It is important to rest until receiving approval from a doctor or healthcare professional to return to play.
- It is better to miss one game than the whole season. Concussions can cause permanent brain damage, affecting the athlete for a lifetime.

HOW CAN AN ATHLETE PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps to take to protect the athletes.

- Follow the rules of the sport and the coach’s rules for safety.
- Have respect for the opponent and practice good sportsmanship at all times
- Use the proper equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). In order for equipment to properly protect the athlete, it must be:
 - The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
 - Worn and fit correctly

- Used every time
- Properly maintained and repaired

WHAT ARE THE STEPS THAT AN ATHLETE SHOULD TAKE IN ATTEMPTING TO RETURN TO SPORT AFTER A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a serious event, but an athlete can recover fully from such an injury if the brain is given enough time to rest and recuperate. Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, is a step-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution.

Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be immediately removed from play, and should not return to activity until they are medically assessed. An athlete with a suspected concussion should not be left alone and should not drive a motor vehicle.

Each step must take a minimum of one day but could last longer, depending on the player and their specific situation.

Step 1:

No activity, only complete rest.

Limit school, work and tasks requiring concentration. Refrain from physical activity until symptoms are gone. Once symptoms are gone, a physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning a step-wise return to play process.

Step 2:

Light aerobic exercise.

Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. The player should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weightlifting. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day.

If the athlete has symptoms: Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

If the athlete has no symptoms: Proceed to Step 3 the next day.

Step 3:

Sport specific activities.

Activities such as stationary passing, dribbling or shooting can begin at step 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high-speed stops.

If the athlete has symptoms: Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

If the athlete has no symptoms: Proceed to Step 4 the next day.

Step 4:

Begin drills without body contact.

If the athlete has symptoms: Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

If the athlete has no symptoms: The time needed to progress from non-contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the player. Proceed to Step 5 only after medical clearance.

Step 5:

Begin drills with body contact.

If the athlete has symptoms: Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

If the athlete has no symptoms: Proceed to Step 6 the next day.

Step 6:

Game play.

This policy was developed and adopted by the Basketball Nova Scotia Board of Directors on Sunday, October 23, 2016.