

SAMPLE

ASAA Policy Relating to the Management of Concussions in Student Athletes

August 2011

BACKGROUND

In 2011, the Alaska State Legislature passed House Bill 15 and Senate Bill 22, requiring school districts to consult with Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA) to develop and publish guidelines and other information to educate coaches, student athletes, and parents of student athletes regarding the nature and risks of concussions. Guidelines must include a description of the risks of return to play and standards for return to play, including procedures required under sections (c) and (d) of Section 14.30.142, Concussions in Student Athletes: Prevention and Reporting.

This was based on findings that

- (1) concussions rank among the most commonly reported traumatic brain injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and recreational activities with as many as 3,900,000 occurring nationally each year as a result of sports and recreational activities;
- (2) a concussion is caused by a blow to or jarring of the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull, resulting in a mild to severe traumatic brain injury, which may occur with or without loss of consciousness, and may disrupt normal brain function;
- (3) a concussion may occur during an organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity as a result of a fall or from players colliding with each other or another obstacle;
- (4) the risk of catastrophic injury or death from a concussion or other head injury increases when the injury is not properly evaluated and managed, and the athlete is allowed to continue to participate in sports or recreational activities following the concussion;
- (5) although voluntary nationwide guidelines for managing concussion in sports recommend assessing concussions on an individual basis, with gradual return to play, athletes continue to be returned to play prematurely, putting them at risk for greater injury or death.

POLICY COMPONENTS

To ensure the adoption of appropriate guidelines and procedures, ASAA encourages member schools and school districts to adopt this policy or an alternative that meets the requirements of the statute. As in all ASAA policies and bylaws, districts may be more restrictive.

District Policy

A district policy must include a description of the risks of return to play and standards for return to play, including the procedures required as follows under Section 14.30.142:

(c) A student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion during a practice or game shall be immediately removed from the practice or game.

(d) A student who has been removed from participation in a practice or game for suspicion of concussion may not return to play until the student has been evaluated and cleared for participation in writing by a qualified person who has received training and is currently certified, as verified in writing or electronically by the qualified person, in the evaluation and management of concussions. Under this provision of the law, a "qualified person" means either a

(1) health care provider who is licensed in the state or exempt from licensure under state law, or

(2) person who is acting at the direction and under the supervision of a physician who is licensed in the state or exempt from licensure under AS 08.64.370(1), (2), or (4).

1. Risks and Standards of Return to Play (RTP)

Introduction

Concussions are a common problem in sports and have the potential for serious complications if not managed correctly. Even what appears to be a "minor ding or bell ringer" has the real risk of catastrophic results when an athlete is returned to action too soon. The medical literature and lay press are reporting instances of death from "second impact syndrome" when a second concussion occurs before the brain has recovered from the first one regardless of how mild both injuries may seem. At many athletic contests across the country, trained and knowledgeable individuals are not available to make the decision to return concussed athletes to play. Frequently, there is undo pressure from various sources (parents, player and coach) to return a valuable athlete to action. In addition, often there is unwillingness by the athlete to report headaches and other findings because the individual knows it would prevent his or her return to play. Outlined below are some guidelines that may be helpful for parents, coaches and others dealing with possible concussions. Please bear in mind that these are general guidelines and must not

be used in place of the central role that physicians and athletic trainers must play in protecting the health and safety of student-athletes.

Side-line Decision Making

1. No athlete should return to play (RTP) on the same day of concussion.
2. Any athlete removed from play because of a concussion must have medical clearance from an appropriate health care professional before he or she can resume practice or competition.
3. Close observation of athlete should continue for a few hours.
4. After medical clearance, RTP should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP based on return of any signs or symptoms.

Medical Clearance Return to Play “RTP” Protocol (from statute)

“A student who has been removed from participation in a practice or game for suspicion of concussion may not return to play until the student has been evaluated and cleared for participation in writing by a qualified person who has received training and is currently certified, as verified in writing or electronically by the qualified person, in the evaluation and management of concussions. A “qualified person” means either a

(1) health care provider who is licensed in the state or exempt from licensure under state law; or

(2) person who is acting at the direction and under the supervision of a physician who is licensed in the state or exempt from licensure under AS 08.64.370(1), (2), or (4).”

ASAA has not taken a position on which “medical providers” might be “qualified” outside of what is stated in state law.

Steps to RTP

Day 0 – Complete Resolution of All Symptoms at Rest. No physical activity. No academic/cognitive activity. **If no return of symptoms, then:**

Day 1 –15 Minutes of Light Aerobic Activity (Walk, Exercise Bike, Etc.)

-Trial half day of school. No homework or tests. **If no return of symptoms, then:**

Day 2 –30 Minutes of Light to Moderate Aerobic Activity (Walk, Exercise Bike, Etc.)

-Trial full day of school. No Homework. No tests. **If no return of symptoms, then:**

Day 3 – 30 Minutes of Moderate to Heavy Aerobic Activity

- Full day school. Regular homework assignments. No tests. **-If no return of symptoms, then:**

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Day 4 – 30 Minutes of Heavy Aerobic Activity and 15 Minutes of Resistance Exercise (Push-ups, Sit-ups, Weight Lifting).

- Full day school. Regular homework. Regular testing. **- If no return of symptoms, then:**

Day 5 – Return to Practice **NON CONTACT Limited Participation. If no return of symptoms, then:**

Day 6 – Return to Full Practice **WITH CONTACT**

ASAA School/Medical Concussion Care Plan

Schools should consider the adoption of a care plan for each student who has been diagnosed. The plan should include the following sections:

- Determination of Symptoms
- Returning to Daily Activities
- Returning to School
- Returning to Sports
- Gradual Return to Play (RTP)

Schools may want to use the enclosed plan document as a template –
School/Medical Concussion Care Plan

<http://asaa.org/wp-content/uploads/School-Medical-Concussion-Care-Plan.pdf>

A sample RTP form -ASAA Release for Student to Resume Participation Following a Concussion Form is enclosed – Return to Play

<http://asaa.org/wp-content/uploads/return-to-play.pdf>

2. Liability

A person who conducts an evaluation under (2) of the previous section and who is not paid for conducting the evaluation may not be held liable for civil damages resulting from an act or omission during the evaluation, except that the person may be held liable for reckless or intentional misconduct and for gross negligence.

3. Coaches Education

Each district shall ensure that each of its coaches (see definition of Coach in Section D. Sports Related Policies, 3. Out-of-Season Participation Policy) undergoes training

regarding the nature and risk of concussions at least every three years, on the same cycle as the required Sports First Aid certification under the Alaska Coaches Education Program. The initial training should occur as soon as possible during the 2011-12 school year and subsequently in conjunction with the Sports First Aid course 3 year renewal requirement.

Each district must decide how it will implement the coaches training requirement from a range of options which include face-to-face sessions and on-line training modules.

Examples of on-line programs are:

- “Concussion in Sports,” available on-line through the NFHS Learning Center for no charge.
<http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000>
- “HEADS UP” Concussion in Youth Sports, available on line through the CDC for no charge.
http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html
- “Concussion Awareness,” available on-line through USA Football.
<http://www.usafootball.com/health-safety/home>

4. Coaches Code of Ethics

The following additions to the Coaches Code of Ethics will be presented to the ASAA Board of Directors for adoption during its October meeting.

“The coach shall be aware of and implement the NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports.

9. Immediately remove any athlete from play who exhibits possible signs and symptoms of concussion. Ensure “Return to Play” status is allowed only after clearance by approved health care provider.”

5. Officials Code of Ethics

The following additions to the Coaches Code of Ethics will be presented to the ASAA Board of Directors for adoption during its October meeting.

“Officials shall be aware of and implement the NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports.

11. Immediately remove any athlete from play and notify the Coach/Meet Management of any athlete who exhibits possible signs and symptoms of concussion. “

6. Student and Parent/Guardian Notification

Each district shall annually provide to a student and the parent or guardian of a student who is under 18 years of age written information on the nature and risks of concussions. A student may not participate in school athletic activities unless the student and the parent or guardian of a student who is under 18 years of age have signed a verification of receipt of the required information. Districts may develop their own form or use ASAA's Parent and Student Acknowledgement and Consent Form to satisfy this requirement. Schools shall keep a copy of the signed form on file.

Parent and Student Acknowledgement Consent

<http://asaa.org/wp-content/uploads/Parent-Student-Acknowledgement-Consent.pdf>

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO CONCUSSION IN SPORTS

Upon recommendation of its Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, ASAA has adopted concussion management guidelines for parents developed by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) in cooperation with the CDC. A copy of these guidelines should be given annually to each student and parent/guardian prior to the student's first athletic contest. Copies may be requested through ASAA or accessed on-line at:

Parent's Guide

http://asaa.org/wp-content/uploads/parents_guide.pdf

ADDITIONAL PERTINENT WEBSITE LINKS

CDC Website with helpful information –

Home Page – <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/index.html>

Coaches Training – http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/online_training.html

Clipboard Sticker - http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Clipboard_Sticker-a.pdf

Parent/Student Acknowledgement Form -

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/Parent Athlete info sheet-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/Parent_Athlete_info_sheet-a.pdf)

Prevention – <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/prevention.html>

School Plan -

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/ACE care plan school version a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/ACE_care_plan_school_version_a.pdf)

Response – <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/response.html>

Resources – <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/resources.html>

Facts for Physicians –

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/Facts for Physicians booklet-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/Facts_for_Physicians_booklet-a.pdf)

Free Materials for Schools - <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/pubs/ncipc.aspx#tbi4>

Other Sources of Information –

Coaches Training – <http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000>

- <http://www.usafootball.com/coach>

Guidelines for Parents/Students/Coaches - <http://asaa.org/wp-content/uploads/Suggested-Guidelines-for-Management-of-Concussion-in-Sports-1.pdf>

Parent/Student Fact Sheet and Acknowledgement Form -
[http://asdk12.org/forms/uploads/Concussion Fact Sheet.pdf](http://asdk12.org/forms/uploads/Concussion_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

Anchorage School District Medical Release for Concussion Patient -
[http://asdk12.org/forms/uploads/Concussion Patient Medical Release.pdf](http://asdk12.org/forms/uploads/Concussion_Patient_Medical_Release.pdf)

Laws of Alaska - Statute – Relating to prevention and evaluation of and liability for concussions in student athletes

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill_text.asp?hsid=HB0015Z&session=27

Establishing an effective date

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_jrn_page.asp?session=27&bill=HB15&jrn=1273&hse=H