



POLICY EXCERPT
SAFETY, MEDICAL, AND CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

All athletes have the right to participate in suitable and safe settings. Safety and the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of each individual athlete shall be of primary importance in all Gymnastics Newfoundland & Labrador and club programs. All athletes have a right to receive qualified instruction from certified and safety conscious coaches.

A. GENERAL SAFETY

It is each club and Head Coach's responsibility to:

- Ensure that a first aid certified coach or adult is present during club training/events.
- Ensure that gymnastics equipment and other facilities are checked for safety on a regular basis including: a daily check of equipment setup patterns and all equipment used that day; a semi-annual check of all cable attachments, floor plates and adjusting devices for signs of wear. Safety checks should be documented by date, noting repairs needed or completed.
- Ensure that emergency action plans are in place for activities, events and competitions.
- Ensure that gymnastics equipment is appropriate for the age and skill level of the participants.
- Ensure that coaches use appropriate progressions for skill development to ensure that the safety and well-being of their athletes are not compromised and ensure that coaches are not attempting to teach skills which are beyond their own level of training and expertise.
- Ensure that athletes are following training plans suitable for their ages and levels and are not competing skills unless they have been performed many times in training and can be performed safely.
- Take action to bring any safety risk they witness to the attention of an official, qualified coach, or Gymnastics NL representative.

B. MEDICAL

These policies and procedures apply to athletes that are travelling as members of Team NL, however, clubs should also ensure that safe medical protocols are in place.

- In the event of an emergency every attempt shall be made to contact the parent/guardian of an injured/ill athlete for consent for treatment and for the communication of information. Injured/ill athletes will be provided with caring attention by a team manager, coach, parent or



other responsible person designated by Gymnastics NL until his/her return home or transfer to a health care facility. Should an athlete need to travel home in case of illness or injury, this will be at the athletes' cost.

- All athletes requiring prescription medications are responsible to provide a Gymnastics NL representative with a list of medications, time and dose to be administered, as well as the reason they are prescribed, unless medications are long standing and are self-administered (for example oral contraceptive). Information in regards to emergency medications and treatments should be provided with detailed instructions, and made readily available to a Gymnastics Saskatchewan representative and Emergency Responders.
- First Aid certified personnel or First Responders shall be available on site for all competitions sanctioned or hosted by Gymnastics Newfoundland & Labrador.

C. CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

Gymnastics NL believes that physical activity and sport participation provides positive developmental and health outcomes in terms of physical, cognitive, social and emotional domains. We recognize that many physical activities have an inherent risk of concussion and that sport-related concussions are a significant public health issue. Gymnastics NL is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for sport participation. To that end, we have created this Concussion Management Protocol to increase awareness of concussion in sport, reduce the incidence of concussion, and ensure the early recognition and appropriate management of concussion in our athletes. We will share this protocol with all participants in our organization and strive to have all athletes follow the Concussion Management Protocol for safe return to learn and play.

What is a Sports Concussion?

According to the *Consensus statement on Concussion in Sport: the 4th International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Zurich 2012*, a Sports Concussion is a brain injury and is defined as a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by traumatic biomechanical forces.

- Concussion may be caused either be a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an "impulsive" force transmitted to the head.
- Concussion typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurological function that resolves spontaneously. However, in some cases, symptoms and signs may evolve over a number of minutes to hours.
- Concussion may result in neuropathological changes, but the acute clinical symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than structural injury.
- Concussion results in a graded set of clinical syndromes that may or may not involve loss of consciousness. Resolution of the clinical and cognitive symptoms typically follows a sequential course. However, it is important to note that in some cases symptoms may be prolonged.



Concussion Causes

A concussion may be caused either be a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an “impulsive” force transmitted to the head. It is recommended that athletes who receive this type of contact should be evaluated for a suspected concussion.

Suspected Concussion

A concussion is suspected when it is recognized that an individual appears to have either experienced an injury or impact that may result in concussion, or is exhibiting unusual behavior (signs and symptoms) that may be the result of a concussion.

Concussion Diagnosis

A concussion is diagnosed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. Ideally this professional will have specific training and experience in the assessment and management of concussions.

This Concussion Management Protocol has three main objectives:

1. **PREVENT** - Create an environment that will minimize concussion incidence and complications through multiple prevention strategies.
2. **IDENTIFY** - Promote an environment that will optimize the early identification of suspected concussions by all stakeholders.
3. **MANAGE** - Optimize management of concussed athletes in their sport, academic, family, work and personal spheres.

PREVENT

There is evidence that concussion education leads to a reduction in incidence and improved outcomes for concussion.

Team NL coaches will receive annual concussion education. Clubs are encouraged to provide education sessions for their coaches.

Education sessions will include the following topics:

- Concussion Physiology
- Signs and Symptoms
- Recognition
- Acute Management of a Suspected Concussion and the Concussion Action Plan
- Return to Learn Protocols
- Return to Plan Protocols
- Prevention Strategies including Fair Play

Concussion education can be delivered in a variety of methods. This may include in-person presentations, videos, and on-line courses. Handouts and web-based resources will help reinforce learning. Posters in the team room or common areas may also be used. Parachute’s Concussion Ed app is another tool. The creation of a Coach’s Binder which includes attendance sheets, a concussion



recognition tool, the Concussion Action Plan, handouts for parents/caregivers/athletes, a concussion documentation tool, and return to learn and return to play guidelines may be beneficial.

Creating a Safe Playing Environment

All equipment will regularly inspected and in good repair.

All coaches will be knowledgeable and current in safe practices in sport. They should be familiar with the risks of concussion and how to minimize risks.

Gym NL will strive to create a concussion culture where athletes feel safe to report a concussion. Athletes will be encouraged to tell the coach when they are injured or hurt. The health and safety of the athlete is our coaches' top priority. We will encourage strong lines of communication between the athlete, coach, parent and health care provider in the management of a concussed athlete to ensure a safe return to learn and play.

IDENTIFY

Recognize the Concussed Athlete

Through education, Sask NL will promote an environment that optimizes the early identification of suspected concussions by all stakeholders including athletes, parents, coaches, and team staff. All should be aware of the Concussion Action Plan.

Coaches and medical professionals will be aware of the forces that cause concussion in athletes, and be vigilant in recognizing signs and symptoms of concussion in an athlete who has suffered a blow to the head or body.

A concussion will be suspected when it is recognized that an athlete appears to have either experienced an injury or impact that may result in concussion, or is exhibiting unusual behavior or reports symptoms that may be the result of a concussion.

Any athlete suspected of suffering a concussion must be immediately removed from play for evaluation.

All concussions will be documented, from identification of concussion to return to learn and play.



MANAGE

Remove the Athlete from Play
Emergency Action Plan

A hit to the head or body can be associated with other serious injuries besides a concussion. Initial management of any suspected concussion will be to initiate an established Emergency Action Plan. Upon evaluation of the athlete using the basic principles of first aid, any athlete displaying any of the following signs warrants activating the Emergency Medical System and urgent transportation to the hospital:

- unconscious
- deteriorating mental status (lethargy, difficulty maintaining arousal, increasing confusion or irritability)
- potential spinal injury (numbness or weakness in the extremities, spine/neck pain)
- progressive worsening symptoms or new neurologic signs (seizure or convulsion)

The athlete will be stabilized and will not be moved until EMS arrives. **Concussion Action Plan**

Any athlete who displays signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a suspected concussion will be removed from play once it is deemed safe to do so, and will not return to activity the same day.

An athlete can be removed from play by their coach, their parent, the Head or Chief Judge, First Responder, medical personnel.

Evaluate the Concussed Athlete

The athlete will be evaluated on the sideline using a tool such as the Pocket CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL. http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/resources/Pocket_CRT_Final.pdf

Documentation of the concussion will begin immediately using a tool such as the Concussion Awareness Training Tool's (CATT) Concussion Response Tool.

<http://ppc.cattonline.com/resources/files/concussion-response-tool.pdf>

Evaluation of the concussed athlete procedures will include assessment of symptoms:

- Confusion and Disorientation
- Double Vision or Fuzzy Vision
- Loss of Consciousness
- Ringing in the Ears
- Headache Slow or Slurred Speech
- Dizziness - Seeing "Stars"
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Feeling Stunned or Dazed
- Loss of Balance
- Emotional or Personality Changes

Notification will be made to parent, coach.

The athlete will have an appointment with their physician for assessment and to begin the Return to Learn and Play Protocols. The athlete will have an appointment with their physiotherapist/chiropractor/athletic therapist for assessment and treatment as indicated.



The athlete with a suspected concussion will be continually monitored for the development and presentation or any Red Flags over the next 48 hours following the injury. Red Flags are indicators that something other than a concussion may be going on. Worsening symptoms and the presence of any Red Flags requires a 911 call and urgent referral to the hospital.

Before allowing an athlete to leave the sporting environment after a suspected concussion, care of the athlete will be transferred to a responsible adult (parent/guardian/friend). The responsible adult will understand the severity of concussion, the Concussion Action Plan, the home care instructions, and will be capable of monitoring the athlete.

Any athlete with a suspected concussion will be evaluated by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner within 48 hours (earlier if Red Flags are present).

Treatment of the Concussed Athlete

Return to Play and Learn Protocol

If a concussion is diagnosed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, the athlete will follow the Return to Learn and Play protocols. In order to ensure the appropriate management of the concussion for a safe Return to Learn and Play it is highly recommended that the athlete and/or parent advise the coach and other professionals (e.g. teachers, coaches of other sports the athlete may be involved in) that the athlete has been diagnosed with a concussion. A collaborative team approach with ongoing communication and monitoring by all members of the team will be employed to safeguard athlete health and safety.

The first step in concussion management is symptom limited physical and cognitive rest. The first priority for the athlete is Return to Learn. This is a stepwise program that is individualized, monitored, and progressed by a health care professional with knowledge in the assessment and treatment of concussion. Progression through the Return to Learn protocol requires the athlete to be symptom free when at rest. A Return to Learn protocol such as Parachute's Protocol for Return to Learn after a Concussion, or the CATT Return to Learn Protocol can be used to guide and document this process. The steps of the protocol may occur at home or at school/work. There is no set length of time for this protocol. The athlete must have documented success in Return to Learn prior to beginning the Return to Play protocol.

After successfully completing the Return to Learn protocol, the athlete may begin the Return to Play progressions. This is again a stepwise program that is individualized, monitored, and progressed by a health care professional with knowledge in the treatment of concussion. The graduated return to play protocol has six stages. Parachute's After a Concussion Guidelines for Return to Play, or CATT's Return to Play Communication Tool can be used to guide and to document this process.

<http://horizon.parachutecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Return-to-Learn-FINAL.pdf>

The protocol will include sport-specific exercises that incorporate the cognitive and physical demands of our sport. Each step of the protocol is a minimum of 24 hours, but some athletes may take longer to successfully progress through each step. The athlete must perform each step without aggravating their symptoms to move to the next step in the protocol.



All athletes will follow the Return to Play Protocol outlined below (from Consensus statement on Concussion in Sport: the 4th International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Zurich 2012).

1. No activity

- Symptom limited physical and cognitive rest
- Objective: Recovery

2. Light aerobic exercise

- Activities such as walking, swimming or biking
- Intensity should be < 70% predicted heart rate
- No resistance training
- Objective: Increase heart rate

3. Sport specific exercise

- Example: skating drills in hockey, running drills in soccer
- Not yet participating in practices, doing drills off to side
- No head impact activities
- No resistance training
- Objective: Add movement

4. Practice, no contact (Noncontact training drills)

- Progression to more complex training drills
- Example: Passing drills in football or hockey
- May start progressive resistance training
- Objective: Exercise, coordination and cognitive load

5. Full contact practice (must have medical clearance)

- After medical clearance participate in normal training activities
- Objective: Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff

6. Game play

- Normal game play

Prior to receiving full clearance for all activities, the athlete must receive clearance from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. This medical clearance will be documented, which may include a note from the practitioner and recording of the date on the documentation tool. The date of full clearance will be documented.

Evaluation and Review of Protocol

This Concussion Management Protocol will be reviewed annually to reveal areas where processes can be improved based on feedback from users.

As new knowledge in concussion management becomes available this document will be reviewed to ensure it continues to reflect current evidence and practices. This review will coincide with the updated publication of the Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport, or as advised by the Sport Medicine and Science Council of Saskatchewan (SMSCS) when new knowledge is available.



For more information visit the Sport Medicine and Science Council of Saskatchewan website at www.smscs.ca

RESOURCES

The SMSCS has compiled the following resources that organizations may include in their Concussion Management Protocol.

PREVENT

Education

In Person Presentation

- Sport Medicine and Science Council of Saskatchewan Concussion Course
1 hour presentation and discussion by a SMSCS consultant

Videos

- Concussion 101: A primer for kids and parents
By Dr. Mike Evans
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCCD52Pty4A>
- Concussion Management and Return to Learn
By Dr. Mike Evans
Appropriate for all
<http://www.reframehealthlab.com/concussion-management/>
- Brain 101
Athlete information video
<http://brain101.orcasinc.com/>
- Cost of Injury- Molly's Story
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h578nsM7qLM>
- Athlete and Mom Stories
<http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/resources/videos.html>

On-line Courses

- Concussion Awareness Training Tool
Courses for parents, athletes and coaches with a printable certificate upon completion
<http://ppc.cattonline.com/>
- Brain 101
Courses for coaches, parents and athletes
<http://brain101.orcasinc.com/>



- Making Headway
National Coaching Certification Program course for Coaches on concussion
<http://www.coach.ca/-p153487>
- Heads Up
Centre for Disease Control (USA) Course for coaches with printable certificate upon completion
<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/inde.g.html>

Handouts

Parachute Canada

- Concussion Guidelines for Parents/Caregivers
http://horizon.parachutecanada.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/10/Parents_Caregivers_Concussion_Guidelines.pdf
- Concussion Guidelines for Coaches and Trainers
http://horizon.parachutecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Coaches_Concussion_Guidelines.pdf
- Concussion Guidelines for the Athlete
http://horizon.parachutecanada.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/10/Athlete_Concussion_Guideline.pdf
- Protocol for Return to Learn After a Concussion
<http://horizon.parachutecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Return-to-Learn-FINAL.pdf>
- After a Concussion Guidelines for Return to Play
http://horizon.parachutecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Parachute-Concussion-Return_to_Play_Guidelines.pdf

Concussion Awareness Training Tool

- Return to Learn and Play Flip Card
<http://ppc.cattonline.com/resources/files/catt-flip.pdf>
- Return to Learn Protocol
<http://ppc.cattonline.com/resources/files/return-to-learn.pdf>
- Return to Play Communication Tool
<http://ppc.cattonline.com/resources/files/return-to-play.pdf>

Alberta Concussion Alliance

- Concussion Management
http://www.sportmedab.ca/uploads/files/Documents/ACA/Concussion_Managemnt_jun16.pdf

Posters



Parachute Canada

- I'm Not Invincible- Boy

http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/resources/Nathan_Poster_ENG_new-updatedURL.pdf

- I'm Not Invincible- Girl

http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/resources/Katherine_Poster_ENG_new-updatedURL.pdf

- Preventable- Have a Word with Yourself

http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/resources/PreventableConcussionPoster_shakeoffconcussion.pdf

Centers for Disease Control

- Heads Up Concussion

https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/youthsports/heads_up_youth_sports_poster-v2-a.pdf

Pledge

Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association

Take Brain Injury Out of Play

<http://www.sbia.ca/tbiop.aspx>

App

Parachute Canada

Concussion Ed

Available at the Apple App Store and Google Play



Websites

Sport Medicine and Science Council of Saskatchewan
<http://www.smscs.ca/concussion-resources/>

Parachute Canada
<http://www.parachutecanada.org/concussion>

Canadian Concussion Collaborative
<http://casem-acmse.org/education/ccc/>

Concussion Awareness Training Tool
<http://www.sportmedab.ca/content.php?id=1745>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Heads Up
<http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/inde.g.html>

MANAGE

- Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool
http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/resources/Pocket_CRT_Final.pdf
- Concussion Awareness Training Tool - Concussion Response Tool
<http://ppc.cattonline.com/resources/files/concussion-response-tool.pdf>