2026 / 2027

PARENTS HANDBOOK

SLWC Board

Revision 1
November 11th, 2026

MISSION STATEMENT

The Southern Lehigh Wrestling Club exists to support youth, middle school, and high school wrestlers in their journey to become better than yesterday—both on and off the mat. We are dedicated to helping athletes achieve their fullest potential, fostering athletic excellence, personal growth, and lifelong success. By providing resources and mentorship, we empower our wrestlers to continuously improve, excel in competition, and prepare for future careers and fulfilling lives.

CORE VALUES

Respect

- **Respect for Teammates and Coaches**: Value each teammate's role and listen to the guidance of coaches with full attention and an open mind.
- **Positive Attitude in the Room**: Create a supportive and motivating atmosphere, helping everyone feel valued and driven to improve.
- **Constructive Criticism**: Provide feedback that helps others grow, and be open to learning from the advice given by teammates and coaches.
- **Appreciation for the Sport**: Show up with focus and dedication, understanding that respect for the sport means putting in the effort during practice and matches.
- **Honor Opponents**: Compete with intensity but always show respect to your opponents, win or lose.

Honor

- **Integrity on and off the Mat**: Practice honesty and fairness in training, matches, and daily life, holding yourself to the highest standards.
- **Accountability to the Team**: Take responsibility for your actions, support your teammates, and strive to be someone the team can rely on.
- **Commitment to Growth**: Aim to improve every day, recognizing that hard work and dedication are crucial to personal and team success.
- **Loyalty to Team Goals**: Put the team's success first, giving your best effort not only for yourself but for your teammates.
- **Courage in Competition**: Wrestle with heart and perseverance, showing strength and resilience, regardless of the outcome.

PHILOSOPHY

The Club's philosophy and #1 goal is to have the kids want to come back year after year. Our coaches' focus is to develop young people through the sport. We want them to have fun, and we want them to be better every day at home and at sport. Wrestling is a challenging sport and will give them confidence to be better at anything else they do including school, other sports and as they grow into young adults.

LEAGUE AND SLWC YOUTH TEAM

THE VALLEY ELEMENTARY WRESTLING LEAGUE (VEWL)

SLYW competes in the VEWL which is a league of youth wrestling clubs comprised from all around the Lehigh Valley. Competition runs December through mid-January. Wrestlers compete at three different levels. Novice, JV, and the Varsity level.

SOUTHERN LEHIGH WRESTLING CLUB YOUTH – Referred to as SLYW hereafter:

Within SLYW, we are broken down into smaller teams for competition:

Exhibition/Novice: all different weights, no set classes

Varsity & JV: 17 weight classes (46 to 160 lbs.)

46, 50, 54, 58, 61, 64, 67, 70, 73, 76, 80, 85, 90, 95, 105, 120, and 160

WRESTLE OFFS:

- All 3rd-6th Graders are automatically on JV; multiple wrestlers are allowed to compete at a single weight at the JV level. VEWL reserves exhibition wrestling to grades K-2 with limited exceptions outside of the end of year tournament.
- Before the first league meet, wrestle-offs determine JV or Varsity placement as needed. The head coach sets the initial lineup and wrestle-off matchups.
- Preliminary bouts are best of 1 and 1-1-1 for timing.
- The final JV/Varsity bout is best of 3 and 1-1:30-1:30 for timing. Once the successful wrestler win's 2 out of 3 matches they have earned their respective spot
- The top JV position will be determined by a true 2nd where applicable (i.e. if the 2nd place finisher did not beat the 3rd place finisher during wrestle offs there will be one more 1-1-1 best of 1 bout).
- Challenges for the second half of the season can be requested by parents/wrestlers and are at the coaches' discretion. They occur in January (or late December) before the first dual meet match of the New Year. To maintain their spot the current varsity wrestler just has to win the first match. If they lose the first match it turns into a best out of 3 match series.

INFORMATION CHANNELS:

TeamSnap

- You will receive Emails each week with key items and match details.
- Full Schedule of practices, competitions and other events will be loaded into TeamSnap.
- Team Chat is used frequently to disseminate pertinent information in real time.
- Feel free to Direct Message with other Parents, Coaches or Booster Board members.

Website: Basic information about program and links for registration, apparel orders, etc. can be found on our website. www.slwrestlingclub.com

Facebook & Instagram: Community interface and general information for anyone not signed up and connected via TeamSnap.

PRACTICE & HYGIENE

PRACTICES

Attire

- Shorts (no belts allowed)
- T-shirts
- Wrestling Shoes
- Mouth guard for any child with braces (these will be required to participate during meets)
- Hair covering (if necessary)
- NO jewelry of any kind may be worn during practices or meets

Hygiene

- After practice, each wrestler should take a shower to prevent skin diseases.
- More importantly, all clothes need to be washed before wearing again.
- In the event of the occurrence of a contagious skin condition, please notify a coach before attending practice or a match. A form must be completed and will be needed to participate in future practices and/or matches. Contact a coach to get a copy of the latest league form.
- Keep fingernails trimmed; JV and Varsity wrestlers will be checked by referees prior to competition.

Practice Guidelines

- Participants will only wrestle with an opponent of similar age, size, and weight
- No wrestler will be forced to wrestle in “live” practice situations
- To compete in varsity league meets, wrestlers must attend SLYW practice on a regular basis. This means they need to consistently be at 2 out of the 3 advanced room practices throughout the year
- Consult with the head coach with any questions or concerns as they have the final word on lineup and eligibility.
- Practice rooms are broken down into Novice and Advanced; Novice is typically K-3 / Advanced 4-6. Final determination is at the discretion of the coaching committee. If you have any concerns about your wrestler’s practice room, please discuss with the head Novice or Advanced room coach.
- No parents are allowed in the gym during advanced room practice to keep the wrestlers focused. For the novice room practice, we will allow parents to be in the gym, but both parents and non-wrestler siblings must not be disruptive or play in the gym during practice. If disruptions occur, you will be asked to wait outside the gym.
- Parents and siblings are welcome to wait in the hallways, however, please be mindful that we are guests and need to be respectful of the facility and others in it.

- Wrestlers should have shoes on and be on the mat at the designated start time. There will be designated water and bathroom breaks (i.e., no running to water bottles in the middle of practice). Bringing your own water bottle is recommended. Also, remember to use the bathroom before practice; not 5 minutes into practice.
- Practice is focused on technique and skills. Wrestlers looking to do more outside of practice can practice motion drills and also work on body weight conditioning - Push Up, Pull Ups, Sit Ups, Squats, Jumps.
- If school is closed, practice is canceled.
- Illness - If you don't go to school due to sickness, please don't come to practice. If you go to school, that doesn't mean you have to come to practice if you are not feeling 100%. Please use your best judgment, we'd rather you stay home and get well than come to practice.

Wrestling Club Participation and Promotion

- Involvement in wrestling clubs is encouraged, however during the season, SLYW practices shall be prioritized and any wrestler with a varsity position is expected to compete in each match unless they are ill or away with their family.
- As standard practice, private or small group lessons are not offered by SLYW or its coaches. If your wrestler is interested in private lessons, or as a coach you are interested in providing them, please reach out to a member of the coaches committee to discuss.

CONDUCT- 3 STRIKE RULE

CONDUCT

- Respect for other teammates, coaches, parents and competitors is of utmost importance.
- There will be no talking back to coaches in our room. Shaking of the head, throwing hands up in the air, muttering under one's breath, giving excuses will not be tolerated.
- If a coach or board member must address your child's behavior while in the wrestling room or at a competition three times (3 strike rule), you will be asked to remove them from this year's season, without refund, as we cannot risk others in the room getting hurt or being distracted.
- For each "strike", the wrestler, along with their parents, will be spoken to by a coach.
- Exception – If a wrestler demonstrates gross neglect for the safety of themselves or others, they may be removed from the program without prior warning.
- Being coachable will aid your wrestler in every aspect of life.

GEAR

UNIFORMS AND APPAREL

Singlets:

- Singlets will be handed out before the week of our first match (Early December).
- Deposits were collected during registration for "loaner" singlets.
- When your singlet has been returned and the end of the season, your deposit will be returned/refunded.

Warm UPs

- All wrestlers receive a team t-shirt and crew neck sweatshirt. Wrestlers should wear these to matches, along with a pair of shorts or sweatpants as their warmup.
- Varsity Wrestlers, as determined by wrestle offs, will be issued a two-piece team warm up. $140 deposit check is required via a postdated check for March 2027.
- Two-piece warm-ups are also available for purchase by any wrestler in the MyHouse Team Store.

Apparel

- Apparel may be purchased anytime for wrestlers, parents, or family members from our team store: https://www.myhousesportsgear.com/southern-lehigh-youth-wrestling/ref/898/
- We may also have inventory of certain items, which will be communicated via TeamSnap or email.

COMPETITIONS

MEET TYPES

Team Quad

- Coaches will write each novice wrestler's weight on their hands.
- They will wrestle a 3-period match and there is no scoring for novice - the main goal is to get them mat time.
- Novice lasts 1 – 1.5 hours and could get 2 to 6 matches.
- After Novice, there will be two matches for both JV and Varsity, 4 teams in total present. Note: In most cases not all JV wrestlers will get a match during each bout. Matches are based on out teams depth chart, established during wrestle offs, and availability wrestlers on opposing team.
- There will be 1 on 1 matches by weight class.
- Individual wins/losses and team win/loss will be scored

Varsity Matches

- Novice/exhibition round robin for 1 -1.5 hours at start
- Our varsity team goes up against other teams.
- There will be 1 on 1 matches by weight class.
- Individual wins/losses and team win/loss will be scored.
- Typically, 4 matches per day
- Varsity wrestlers are expected to stay for the entire match, even if they are done wrestling for the day to support their team

JV Round Robin

- Round robin style tournament for JV wrestlers
- Madison Bracketing is utilized (i.e., wrestlers of similar weights a grouped together).
- Wrestlers must confirm their ability by the Monday before the event.

SCHEDULE & TIMES

Start Times

- The league sets the schedule and manages end of the year tournaments. www.vewl.org
- We will add all relative details to TeamSnap.
- Specific details for each match will be added to Team Snap 1-2 weeks ahead once we receive them from the host team.
- Novice start times are typically between 8:30am and 9:30am
- Exhibition: Wrestlers should aim to arrive 30 minutes ahead of their start time. After the 1-hour session is over, exhibition wrestlers can head home. Organized this way in order to get kids as much opportunity to wrestle as possible.
- JV/Varsity: For Varsity only and Quad Matches arrive 30 minutes before weigh in time. Exhibition doesn't weigh in. About ½ hour after start time, the JV and Varsity will weigh in.

- Weigh Ins - We will send out results from wrestle offs including JV and Varsity line ups. Wrestles must weigh equal to or lesser than their listed weight class. Wrestlers wear their singlet to weigh in and get a 0.2lb allowance for the singlet.

Season Schedule:

- VEWL competitions are in TeamSnap.
- We'll wrestle approximately 14 teams
- There is 1 home match this year (out of 7 total). 5 Varsity, 4 JV, 4 Novice.
- Exhibition Night at Emmaus is a good event for novice wrestlers to get referred matches also.

Entry Fees

- Door entry fees at all matches, as well as concessions
    - These support the host team's program
    - At away matches, you will pay approximately $7 adult/$5 child
- Home matches are held at the Southern Lehigh High School
    - At home matches, if you arrive before we start collecting money then you don't pay.
    - We will speak to you about arriving earlier to assist in setup
    - We will need many volunteers to make it a successful event. There will be communication regarding what help would be needed prior to the event. If we do not have enough volunteers to support the event we will mandate help.

Tournaments

We are hosting our 3rd Annual pre-season tournament this year. Our youth wrestlers are encouraged to participate in this event to gain valuable mat time. To sign up visit www.slwrestlingclub.com and go to the SL Scuffle page.

We may also be sponsoring entry fees to some tournaments at the end of the year pending interested and availability. Details will come near the end of the season for those. For sponsored tournaments, the club will pay the entry fee and we'll have coaches there throughout the day to support your wrestlers.

Please see www.PennsylvaniaYouthWrestling.com for tournaments in the area. There are other clubs and camps pre and post season which your wrestler can participate in.

Nutrition Ideas for Wrestlers

The coaches will be talking to wrestlers during practice about healthy choices for pre-match hydration and nutrition. We will emphasize the use of water and watered-down commercial sports drinks as opposed to soda and fruit juices. We will emphasize the right combination of proteins, poly unsaturated fats, and carbohydrates and the avoidance of empty calorie fast foods.

SL WRESTLING CLUB

VOLUNTEERING & FUNDRAISING

Volunteering

The youth organization operates on the volunteered time of our parents and community members. The more people get involved, the greater impact we can have on our athletes and community. No amount of support is too small and every bit is appreciated. Please consider volunteering.

Fundraising

To run a successful program, fundraising is very important. This helps us invest in equipment, off-season training, sponsoring tournaments to name a few. We look to local businesses for donations as well as food donations for our snack stand at our home events. Our big fundraiser is selling Lottery Calendars. Without your support, we cannot continue to grow and give our wrestlers the best chance to succeed in the sport.

Home Matches

We need help with covering the snack stand during our home meets and pre-season tournament. We have sign-up sheets that will go out via email. Each family is expected to donate supplies/food for the snack stand **AND** work a shift when your child is not on the mat.

Banquet

End of season banquet offers opportunities to volunteer your time. Ordering trophies, jackets, raffle baskets, video and picture taking. March date TBD.

Picture Day

This will be in mid-December. Forms will be emailed out as this is managed electronically now. You can submit online and-or bring a printout.

Wrestling Club (Booster Club) Meetings

Meetings occur every month. We encourage all parents to attend and get updates on latest activities and find opportunities to get involved. Meeting agendas and minutes are posted on our website: www.slwrestlingclub.com.

Social Outings:

Our team gets together for various planned outings during or post-season,

- Lehigh home wrestling match: 06-Nov-26
- Iron Pigs home game (April/May TBD).

Tickets will be sold on a first come, first serve basis. More info to come.

WEBSITE Website

- http://www.slwrestlingclub.com/

GUIDE TO WATCHING WRESTLING

You will enjoy watching wrestling more if you know what's going on! Here is a basic guide to scoring and other key features of high school wrestling.

THE BASICS

There are three 2-minute periods with no rest in between. The wrestler with the most points at the end of the period wins. If a wrestler pins his or her opponent before that, the match is over and that wrestler wins by fall (pin). If the third period ends with a tie, overtime periods are added until one wrestler wins. The match can also end by "technical fall" if one wrestler gains a 15-point advantage, if one wrestler is disqualified, or if one wrestle is injured, in which case he or she loses by default. There are 14 weight classes. The team's score is calculated as a result of all 14 matches.

POSITIONS

Neutral position: Wrestlers stand facing each other a few feet apart
Referee's position: One wrestler is perched on all fours (bottom). The other is (on top) alongside him with one hand on his opponent's elbow and the other around the opponent's waist.

INDIVIDUAL SCORING

Takedown = 3 points
From the neutral position, one wrestler takes the other to the mat and controls him or her from the top

Reversal = 2 points
A wrestler on the bottom in the referee's position attains the top position

Escape = 1 point
A wrestler on the bottom in the referee's position attains the neutral position

Back points = 2, 3, or 4 points
When the bottom wrestler has his back exposed to the mat at an angle of 45 degrees or less for 2-4 seconds points are awarded equal to the number of seconds of exposure (maximum of 4 at one time).

Penalty points = 1 or 2 points
Penalty points can be assessed for stalling, false starts, clasping hands, illegal holds or technical violations. Repeated penalties can lead to disqualification.

OVERTIME- There are no ties. Overtime periods will be used until a winner is declared. The following is the standard overtime procedure; however, some tournaments may modify the rules: one 1-minute sudden death, two 30-second tie-breakers, one 30-second ride-out.

TEAM SCORING

6 points: Wrestler wins by fall, forfeit, injury or disqualification
5 points: Wrestler wins by technical fall (15 point spread)
4 points: Wrestler wins by major decision (8-14 point spread)
3 points: Wrestler wins by regular decision (7 points or less)

PARENTAL MATCH CONDUCT

Parent Guidance

It is easy to get caught up on competitiveness, as parents. No reason for parents to criticize your kid's performance; coaches will teach them how to improve and work on things. Your job as a parent is to make them feel better when they lose.

The **referee's** mission is to keep the kids safe. Referees will make bad calls sometimes. The greener the wrestler, the harder it is to officiate the match. There are lessons on the receiving end of a bad call. Everywhere we go we represent ourselves, our kids and our community. SLYW asks that you conduct yourself in a manner that represents the values we are working to instill into our wrestlers. They'll hear 25% of what we say, and take in 100% of what we do.

MATCH DAY PREPARATION

A. The night before
    a. Bedtime early, good dinner, good breakfast, car warm and ready
    b. Pack a good lunch or snacks
B. Match Day
    a. Be positive!
    b. Don't talk about ranking, trophies, medals, prior matches, how good the other team was last year, etc.
    c. Identify nervousness – it's the body's way of getting ready
    d. Tell them how proud you are before you get there
C. After the Match
    a. Only praise. Tell them how proud you are of them
    b. Constructive criticism comes from coaches later
    c. Nothing about the ref, the match up, or excuses
    d. Focus on something they tried to do in the match that we have been working on
    e. More praise for close matches, you enjoy close matches!
    f. Focus on effort, not performance
D. Dealing with losses
    a. Coaches will monitor
    b. Teammates will help out
    c. Our focus is on competing with oneself not our opponents – it's not WHO you wrestle, it's HOW you wrestle
    d. Communication is key
        (i) Problems referred to us after the match, not during
        (ii) Something you don't like or think is unfair, tell us away from the kids

PLEASE DO

- Have your wrestler at the match early
- Cheer on your wrestler and his or her teammates. Please leave the coaching to the coaches.
- Say positive things to wrestlers after a match, both on the SLYW team and on the other team as well. "Great match" is always short, sweet, to the point, and appropriate.
- Pitch in as a volunteer scorer, timer, runner, etc. This is a great time to learn what needs to be done to pull off a successful dual meet.
- Have a great time! Wrestling is a very special sport and this will be a very positive experience for your family.
- Enjoy the rest of your weekend after the match. We encourage all of our wrestlers to leave everything on the mat. That means when the match is over…it is ***OVER!*** If your wrestler feels like talking about their match with you, that's fine. If they are not talking about it, it's because he or she doesn't want to talk about it. Wrestling is a healthy sport. Obsession with success or failure in wrestling is unhealthy.
- Instead, buy your wrestler a snack or take them to a movie. They've earned a reward for being courageous enough to step out on the mat and wrestle. There is a time and a place for everything. A youth wrestler is not a videotape. They do not want to go over their match over and over again. When the match is over, they just want to be themselves. The SLYW coaches will follow up with every wrestler about the things they did properly and the things they can improve upon.

PLEASE DON'T

- Say anything unless it is positive.
- Coach your wrestler from the stands. It distracts the wrestler to hear a parent's voice giving advice which often conflicts with what the coaches are telling them.
- Yell and scream obnoxiously or say derogatory things about the other wrestlers, coaches or parents. This seems obvious, but you wouldn't believe what we have seen over the years. Emotions sometimes get the best of all of us. The wrestling room is a small place and there are lots and lots of ears around. We tell the SLYW team to wrestle on the mat and act like wrestlers off of the mat. Please remember that the behavior of the parents of our SLYW wrestlers also reflects on our program.
- Approach the scorer's table or coaches while they are in the corner coaching. There is a lot of stuff going on, and we don't have the liberty to answer all of your questions during a match. We'll have some people off to the side who may be able to help you with questions. ***Under no circumstances are parents allowed on the mat during a match.*** If your child is injured, a coach will wave you onto the mat if and when parental attention is required.
- Dwell on the result of the match. Life is a journey, not a destination and this is a marathon not a sprint. This is all a process that will result in all of us becoming better wrestlers, better athletes, and better people.

APPENDIX 1: INJURY REPORT

Date of Injury_____ Time_____a.m./p.m.

Location_____

Athletes Name_____ Age_____ Date of Birth_____

Type of Injury_____

Anatomical area involved_____

Cause of Injury_____

_____

_____

_____

Extent of Injury_____

_____

_____

Name of Person administering First Aid_____

First Aid administered_____

_____

Other Treatment administered_____

_____

Referral Action_____

_____

Signature of Person administering First Aid_____ Date_____

APPENDIX II: 16 Things About Concussions Parents Need to Know

CONCUSSION FACTS

Concussions are traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) that can happen to anyone of any age during any activity that jars the brain.

Overall, the activities associated with the greatest number of TBI-related emergency department visits include biking, football, playground activities, basketball, and soccer.

- High school athletes are one of the most at-risk groups for sustaining a concussion. It is estimated that more than 140,000 high school athletes across the United States suffer a concussion each year. (Data from NFHS Injury Surveillance System)
- Concussions occur most frequently in football, but lacrosse, ice hockey, girls' soccer, wrestling, and girl'sgirls' basketball follow closely behind. All athletes are at risk.

Q. What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary or in some cases lasting 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. Concussion symptoms may last from a few days to several months. Some may never go away. Concussions can cause symptoms that interfere with school, work, and social life.

Q. If my child has a concussion, will s/he be, OK?

Most likely your child will be fine. The vast majority of children who have sustained a concussion make a complete recovery with no complications. However, it's crucial that a child with a concussion is diagnosed and treated properly, and that s/he avoids physical and mental exertion for the period of time recommended by the doctor.

Some children with concussions do develop more serious complications. It might be month before they regain normal brain function and feel "like themselves" again. This is especially true of children who experience a second concussion before fully recovering from their first.

If your child has suffered a possible concussion, the most important thing you can do to maximize his/her chances of a full recovery is to seek immediate medical treatment. Always follow prescribed recommendations for rest, monitoring, and follow-up care. And, if your child plays sports, be sure to adhere to the restrictions and gradual schedule for return to play outlined by the doctor.

CONCUSSION FACTS (continued)

Q. Is there any way to prevent concussions? Do helmets and mouth guards help?

Nothing can prevent a concussion. Helmets were designed to guard against catastrophic brain injuries, not concussions. Mouth guards, although very good at protecting the mouth and teeth, do not lower the risk of concussions.
Neck-strengthening exercises may help reduce the chance of your child's head snapping forward or backward if s/he sustains a blow to the body. Talk to your doctor about recommended exercises for your child's age, size, and (if applicable) sport.
If your child has already suffered one concussion, the best way to prevent another is to make sure s/he has recovered fully (getting plenty of mental and physical rest) and been cleared by a doctor before returning to his/her normal routine, including athletics.

I Suspect My Child Has a Concussion: The first 24 hours
Q. How can I tell if my child has sustained a concussion?

Concussions can have many different symptoms. Some children experience many symptoms, whereas others have only a few. Every concussion is different!
Things you might observe or your child might experience following a concussion:

- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Balance problems
- Disorientation
- Nausea
- Difficulty remembering
- Confusion
- Behavior or personality changes
- Sensitivity to light
- Sleep Problems
- Fatigue
- Vision changes
- Hearing changes
- Decreased attention
- Increased irritability
- Feeling sluggish or foggy

CONCUSSION FACTS (continued)

Signs – Observed by Others

Physical

- Moves clumsily (altered coordination)
- Exhibits balance problems
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Less energetic

Cognitive

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Seems confused
- Forgets plays or instructions
- Is unsure about game, score, opponent
- Responds slowly to questions
- Forgets events prior to hit or fall
- Forgets events after hit or fall

Emotional

- Shows changes in mood, behavior, or personality

Signs – Reported by Athletes

Physical

- Headaches or pressure in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Double vision, blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, fatigued, or groggy
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Numbness or tingling

CONCUSSION FACTS - Signs – Reported by Athletes (continued)

Cognitive

- Problems concentrating
- Problems remembering
- Foggy or hazy feeling

Emotional

- Just not feeling right or feeling down

Sleep problems

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Sleeping less/more than usual

Q. My child did not lose consciousness. Does this mean my child did not have a concussion?

A child can have a concussion without losing consciousness. In fact, very few children lose consciousness when they sustain a concussion.

Q. My child did not get hit in the head. Could s/he still have a concussion?

It is possible to sustain a concussion without being directly hit in the head. A concussion is most often caused by a direct blow to the head, but it can also result from body actions that snap the head forward or back, shaking the brain around in the skull hard enough to cause the brain injury, such as whiplash injury. Any action that results in the brain being bounced around can cause a concussion.

Q. It didn't appear that my child got hit that hard. Could s/he really have sustained a concussion?

Yes, a fairly light looking hit can result in a concussion. And a hit that appears to be hard or very forceful might not result in any symptoms at all. Many other factors affect the severity of the injury (if any), including the angle of hit, whether the athlete was prepared for the hit, etc.

Q. The coach pulled my child from the game after s/he collided with a teammate. S/he got up and stumbled and looked dazed, but said s/he felt fine except for a mild headache. Is it really necessary to take him/her out of the game?

If an athlete is suspected of having a concussion, s/he must immediately be removed from play, be it a game or practice. Continuing to participate in physical activity after a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, increased risk for further injury, and even death. Parents and coaches are not expected to be able to diagnose a concussion. That is the job of a medical professional. However, you

CONCUSSION FACTS (continued)
must be aware of the signs and symptoms of a concussion, and if you or a coach is suspicious, then the child must stop playing: **When in doubt, sit them out!**

Q. Is a concussion always obvious right away?

Most of the time, sign or symptoms appear at the time of the injury. However, it's always possible that symptoms won't emerge until later (or they will be subtle enough to be overlooked, especially if the child has also suffered a more visible injury such as a fracture or laceration).
For this reason, even if your child received immediate treatment from and athletic trainer school nurse, EMT, or in the emergency room or urgent care, s/he must also see his/her regular doctor as soon as possible. S/he should be monitored closely for the next few days.

Q. My child sustained a concussion. Should I take him/her to see a doctor?

All athletes who sustain a concussion need to be evaluated by a health care professional who is familiar with sports concussions. You should call your child's physician and explain what has happened and follow your physician's instructions. If your child is vomiting, has a severe headache, or is having difficulty staying awake or answering simple questions, s/he should be taken to the emergency department immediately.

Q. Do I need to wake my child up every hour when s/he is sleeping?

No. Sleep is the best treatment for a concussion. It is OK to let him/her sleep without interruption the night of the injury after evaluation by a healthcare professional, or if you have spoken with your child's physician and s/he does not think your child needs further evaluation in the emergency department.

Q. Is it okay to give my child medicine for his/her headache?

Relieving headache pain is certainly appropriate but it does not replace the need for cognitive and physical rest if symptoms are present. Be aware that symptom improvement with medication does not mean that the brain has recovered. After a concussion is diagnosed, talk to your physician about the use of medications – including type of medication and dose – for headache pain and other symptoms.

Q. What signs indicate a need for immediate emergency attention rather than waiting to see our pediatrician?

In the first 1-2 days after the injury, you should watch your child very carefully. You should get immediate medical help if your child:

- Loses consciousness/can't be awakened
- Vomits repeatedly
- Gets a headache that worsens, lasts for a long time, or is severe
- Has weakness, numbness, trouble walking, or decreased coordination

CONCUSSION FACTS (continued)

- Has difficulty recognizing familiar people
- Is very confused
- Has trouble talking or slurred speech
- Has a seizure (arms or legs shake uncontrollably)

Q. My child wants to sleep all day long. Should I allow him/her to sleep as much as s/he wants?

A concussion affects how the brain works, so resting the brain as much as possible is necessary for recovery. Large amounts of sleep are normal. When your child is sleeping, his/her brain is recovering. It is a good idea to track the amount your child is sleeping and report it to your medical professional.

Q. Does my child need to give up sports if s/he has suffered a concussion?

Athletes should not return to sports while still having symptoms from a concussion because they are at risk for prolonging symptoms and further injury. It is very rare that any child is told to give up playing sports after a single injury. However, if the recovery is quite prolonged (greater than 6 months), you should consult with a concussion specialist to further discuss the possible risks of return to playing sports. An evaluation with a concussion specialist should be considered in any child who has had more than one sports-related concussion.

Q. My doctor told my child to have mental rest. What exactly does "rest" mean? Can my child watch television, play video games, text, etc.?

Mental rest means avoiding activities that require the brain to work hard to process information. This includes critical thinking and problem-solving activities such as schoolwork, homework, and technology use.
Restrictions form the following should be considered, because these activities increase brain function and can therefore worsen symptoms and delay recovery:

- Computer work / internet use
- Video games
- Television
- Text messaging / cell phone use
- Bright lights, such as strobe lights at school dances
- Listening to loud music or music through headphones
- Loud noises
- Parties, concerts, pep rallies, etc.
- Driving
- Work

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