



## **Spokane Soccer Academy (SSA) Official Concussion Protocol**

Spokane Soccer Academy (SSA) is committed to protecting the athletes that join us for academy. And so, SSA has adopted a Concussion Safety Protocol. This concussion protocol identifies 1) the definition of a sports-related concussion, 2) symptoms of a concussion, 3) how SSA will handle an athlete suspected of having a concussion or being diagnosed with a concussion at practice, and 4) a return to play procedure. SSA wants all of the athletes participating in a safe way and we are committed to protecting the players.

### **1. Definition of a sports-related concussion.**

In 2022, the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Concussion in Sport define a sports-related concussion (SRC) as:

“An SRC is a traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a direct blow to the head, neck, or body that occurs in sports and exercise-related activities, resulting in an impulsive force being transmitted to the brain which initiates a neurotransmitter and metabolic cascade possibly causing axonal injury changes in blood flow, and inflammation affecting the brain.

Symptoms and signs may present immediately, or evolve over minutes or hours, which commonly resolve within days, but may be prolonged.

No abnormality is seen in standard structural neuroimaging studies, such as computed tomography or magnetic resonance imaging T1- and T2-weighted images, but in research settings, abnormalities may be present in functional, blood flow, or metabolic imaging studies. SRCs can cause a wide range of fascination clinical symptoms and signs, which may or may not involve loss of consciousness. The clinical symptoms and signs of concussion are not solely explained by drug, alcohol, or medication use; other injuries such as cervical injuries and peripheral vestibular dysfunction; or other comorbidities, such as psychological factors or coexisting medical conditions.”

Concussions are most common in youth sports when a child heads the ball, collisions with another player, or hitting their head on the ground. SSA encourages using your head when it is appropriate and SSA teaches how to establish proper heading technique.

### **2. Symptoms of a concussion.**

According to the Mayo Clinic, symptoms of a concussion may not occur right away. They also may last for varying times. The most common symptoms are “headache, confusion, and loss of memory, known as amnesia.”

The Mayo Clinic outlined other symptoms of a concussion.

- Headache.
- Ringing in the ears.
- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Fatigue or drowsiness.
- Blurry vision.

Other symptoms of a concussion include:

- Confusion or feeling as if in a fog.
- Amnesia surrounding the event.
- Dizziness or "seeing stars."

Sometimes it is difficult to tell if a child has a concussion. The Mayo Clinic advises to watch out for these symptoms in children:

- Dazed appearance.
- Listlessness and tiring easily.
- Irritability and crankiness.
- Loss of balance and unsteady walking.
- Excessive crying.
- Change in eating or sleeping patterns.
- Lack of interest in favorite toys.
- Vomiting.

For coaches/mentors at SSA it is important to keep an eye out for symptoms as well. The Mayo Clinic says:

“A witness may observe these symptoms in the person with a concussion:

- Temporary loss of consciousness, though this doesn't always occur.
- Slurred speech.
- Delayed response to questions.
- Dazed appearance.
- Forgetfulness, such as asking the same question over and over.”

### **3. SSA Concussion Protocol.**

If the player is suspected of having a concussion, the player will be removed from play/practice. The player will be removed during the training when said concussion was suspected of happening.

Even if a player is not showing concussion symptoms at the practice said concussion happened, concussion symptoms may show up a few hours later, therefore the player will also sit out of the next practice if a concussion is suspected. Parents, guardians, and players are required to report any symptoms they notice at home, so the coaches can keep their player safe at training.

Mentors, defined as volunteer coaches (typically around high school age), should alert an adult coach if they see any kind of head contact. Any coach alerted to head contact must also report it to Kevin Moon, coach and owner of SSA. Moon will have a conversation with the player's parent or guardian when they are picked up. If a babysitter or someone other than their parent or guardian picks the athlete up, they need to follow up with a phone call.

Communication between parents/guardians and Kevin is crucial to keep the athletes safe throughout sessions.

#### **4. Return to play.**

If athletes need to see a medical professional, the medical professional must clear them to return to play, and the parents/guardian must bring a doctor's note letting the coaches know their child is cleared before the session. SSA will not allow a player to return until they have been cleared. A coach or mentor as SSA cannot clear a player to come back to play. SSA does recommend, if head trauma has occurred, to get checked by a medical professional, because concussion symptoms reveal themselves differently in each child.

As the athlete is returning to play, coaches and mentors will be monitored during the session. There will be a gradual return to play for players that have been diagnosed with a concussion. There will also be little to no head exposure allowed for the athlete returning to play.

Coaches and mentors are certified by Safe Sport to notice concussion signs and symptoms during a training session.