



PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL



After a concussion, an athlete should only return to sports practices with the approval and under the supervision of their healthcare provider. The healthcare provider must be an approved Medical Doctor, Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, or certified athletic trainer that is trained in management of traumatic head injuries. Each step typically takes a minimum of 24 hours. It is important for an athlete's parent(s), coach(es), and school nurse(s) to watch for concussion symptoms after each day's return to sports progression activity.

The athlete can start the stepped progression when they become asymptomatic. An athlete should only move to the next step if they do not have any new symptoms at the current step. If an athlete's symptoms come back or if he or she gets new symptoms, this is a sign that the athlete is pushing too hard. The athlete should stop these activities and the athlete's medical provider should be contacted. After more rest and no concussion symptoms, the athlete can start at the previous step.

In Pittsylvania County, the Certified Athletic Trainers will have the athlete perform retesting with the same software that they have a baselined periodically. This will assist the medical professionals with appropriate return to participation for their sports.

STEP 1: BACK TO REGULAR ACTIVITIES

The athlete is back to their regular activities (such as school) and has the green-light from their healthcare provider to begin the return to sports progression. Must be asymptomatic for 24 hours.

STEP 2: LIGHT AEROBIC ACTIVITY

Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase an athlete's heart rate. This means about 15-30 minutes on an exercise bike, walking, or light jogging. No weight lifting at this point. Typically, most athletes will perform 2 sets of 15 minutes of a medium paced walk with a 5-minute break in the middle.

STEP 3: MODERATE, NON-CONTACT ACTIVITY

Continue with activities to increase an athlete's heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, moderate-intensity weightlifting (less time and/or less weight from their typical routine). Activities can be individualized sport related movements with no contact. Football athletes can participate in helmets only.

STEP 4: HEAVY, NON-CONTACT ACTIVITY

Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting routine, non-contact sport-specific drills (in 3 planes of movement). Football athletes can participate in helmets and shoulder pads with no contact.

STEP 5: PRACTICE & FULL CONTACT

Athlete may return to practice and full contact (if appropriate for the sport) in controlled practice.

STEP 6: COMPETITION

Athlete may return to competition.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the protocol, please feel free to contact:

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