

“THE CONCUSSION RULE”

The New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) has joined with the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) in formulating a **“Concussion Rule”**. Sports official organizations and their individual officiating members play the major role in the appropriate management of this rule. This rule supercedes any sport specific rulebook discussion on the topic of possible concussions.

Basically stated, “Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headaches, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be **immediately removed** from the contest and **shall not return** to play that day until cleared by an **appropriate health-care professional**”.

Sports officials will play a paramount role in the removal of the athlete from the contest. If signs of a possible concussion have been exhibited, the sport’s official will have the injured player removed. A good indicator is to look at the eyes of the injured player as a first. Make a notation on the game’s score-sheet including the name and uniform number of the removed player. Indicate pertinent circumstances and what resulted if the player returned to the playing field. Identify the medical personnel involved. The official should not be involved in any further evaluation or management of the athlete. That player is basically, done for the day. An athlete may not return if an appropriate health care provider is not available to give medical clearance. A nurse, athletic trainer, emergency paramedic and the team’s coach/AD do not qualify as appropriate health care providers. A certified medical physician assigned by the school could qualify, if on site.

We would always hope that a coach and official would be reacting quickly together to recognize and react appropriately to **any** of the following signs, symptoms, and behaviors of possible post-head trauma:

A. Problems in Brain Function –

- a. Confused state – Dazed look, vacant stare, confusion about what happened or is happening.
- b. Memory problems – Can’t remember assignment on play, opponents, score of game, or period of the game. Can’t remember how or with whom he/she traveled to the game, what he/she is wearing, what was eaten for breakfast etc.
- c. Symptoms reported by athlete – Headache, nausea, or vomiting, blurred or double vision, over sensitivity to sound, light or touch, ringing in the ears, feeling foggy or groggy.
- d. Lack of sustained attention – Difficulty sustaining focus adequately to complete a task or a coherent thought or conversation

B. Speed of brain function – Slow response to questions, slow slurred speech, incoherent speech, slow body movements, slow reaction time.

C. Unusual Behaviors – Behaving in a combative, aggressive or very silly manner, or just atypical for the individual. Repeatedly asking the same question over and over. Restless and irritable behavior with constant motion and attempts to return to play or leave. Reactions that seem out of proportion and inappropriate. Changing position frequently and having trouble resting or finding a comfortable position.

D. Problems with Balance and Coordination – Dizzy, slow, clumsy movements, inability to walk a straight line or balance on one foot with eyes closed.

Head injuries are extremely serious and can result in death or severe brain damage. The safety of an athlete should always come first. BOCES and the OCC must receive all noted information and other details as necessary.