



Concussion Protocol for 2019

Concussion can occur when a player receives an impact to the head or body that causes the brain to shake inside the skull. If a player is knocked out or loses consciousness, they have obviously sustained a concussion, but it is important to remember that a person can be concussed without losing consciousness.

For Hockey Nelson the on- field/dugout or side-line Concussion Checklist is an essential tool to use to determine signs and symptoms of concussion. If a player appears stunned, dazed or confused after an impact ask some of the following questions to check if the player is aware of their surroundings and that their memory is working correctly.

- What ground are we at?
- Which team are we playing today?
- What position are you playing?
- Which half is it?
- What is the score of the game?

If they answer any of the questions incorrectly, or are very slow to respond, it indicates that they have probably sustained a concussion and should not continue to play.

Watch for unsteadiness when they stand up or poor balance and co-ordination as these are also signs of concussion. Players may also complain of other symptoms such as blurred or double vision, ringing in their ears, sensitivity to light and noise. They may experience nausea or vomiting, a headache or feel extremely tired or become irritable. If any of these symptoms are present a player should not return to play.

Players who are concussed are often unaware of their symptoms and may want to continue playing. - They usually do! It is imperative that the Coach / Umpires take responsibility for the player's well-being, assess the player and make an informed choice about whether the player should continue to play or not – if any doubt the player must be removed from play.

Even if there are no immediate symptoms of concussion these can show up later, so it is important to keep a close eye on the player. Ensure the player is regularly checked and not left alone during the first four hours after injury. As the coach YOU should make certain that your player has a 'buddy' who will make sure he is not left alone for the first four hours" and get him home safely for his parents or guardian to monitor. Give the concussion advice slip (from the concussion checklist) to the player and their guardian so everyone knows what to watch for over the first 24 - 48 hours. While Hockey Nelson will have some of these on hand it is advisable that Coaches access that information themselves from the ACC website.

Concussed Players must get urgent medical treatment if they show signs of:

- Worsening headache.
- Increased drowsiness or can't be woken up.
- Vomiting.
- Increased confusion or agitation.
- Weakness in any limbs.
- Slurred speech.
- Loss of consciousness or seizure.

Players should not return to sport until symptom free AND medically cleared. Hockey Nelsons mandatory stand down period is for a minimum 3 weeks and Coaches should be getting a medical clearance form from a Doctor before they allow the player to resume playing. If they return too soon, while symptoms are still present, it will slow recovery and put them at risk of further concussions. If you sustain a second concussion before the previous one has fully resolved the impact will be more severe and can in some instances be fatal.

What should you do if concussion occurs?

ALWAYS assume a cervical spine injury if the player is unconscious, so do not move the player.

If there is any risk of a neck injury, stabilise the player's head and neck, then get help

Check ABCs

Airways

– remove anything blocking airway

Breathing

– is player breathing? If not, start mouth to mouth resuscitation

Circulation

– is there a pulse? If not, start Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

When appropriate support (doctor or ambulance crew) has stabilised the neck with a collar, the player may be taken from the field on a scoop stretcher or spinal board.

A doctor or sports medic should make a thorough medical assessment, record the symptoms and events leading to the injury and make further hospital referral if required.

No concussed player should return to their sport until they have been cleared by a medical professional.

The concussion check list form is a wallet sized card obtained from ACC (ACC1409 Sideline concussion check card) which Hockey Nelson will have some copies on hand for use by Team management.

This document has been prepared by the Operations Manager of Hockey Nelson.
Draft date May 2019.

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