



**IMPLEMENTATION OF NFHS SPORTS PLAYING
RULE FOR CONCUSSIONS**

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) institutes a national playing rule regarding potential head injuries. The rule requires "any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional."

DEFINITION OF CONCUSSION - A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. An athlete doesn't have to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion. *NOTE: The persons who should be alert for such signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion in an athlete include appropriate healthcare professionals, coaches, officials, parents, teammates, and, if conscious, the athlete himself/herself.*

BEHAVIOR OR SIGNS OBSERVED THAT ARE INDICATIVE OF A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY A PLAYER THAT ARE INDICATIVE OF A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of consciousness • Appears dazed or stunned • Appears confused • Forgets plays • Unsure of game, score, or opponent • Moves clumsily • Answers questions slowly • Shows behavior or personality changes • Can't recall events prior to or after the injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Nausea • Balance problems or dizziness • Double or fuzzy vision • Sensitivity to light or noise • Feeling sluggish • Feeling foggy or groggy • Concentration or memory problems • Confusion

PROTOCOL

This protocol is intended to provide the mechanics to follow during the course of contests/matches/ events when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion. For the purposes of this policy, appropriate health care professionals are defined as: physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers.

POLICY

1. During the pre-game conference of coaches and officials, the official shall remind the head coaches that a school-approved appropriate health care professional will need to clear for return to play any athlete removed from a contest for an apparent head injury, unless that injury is the result of the student-athlete losing consciousness for any period of time. In such a situation, the student-athlete shall be removed from the practice or contest and will not be allowed to return to activity that day and will be subject to the Association's Return to Play policy.
2. The officials will have no role in determining concussion other than the obvious situation where a player is unconscious or apparently unconscious as is provided for under the previous rule. Officials will merely point out to a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise the coach that the player should be examined by the school-approved health care provider.
3. If it is confirmed by the school's approved health care professional that the student did not sustain a concussion, the head coach may so advise the officials during an appropriate stoppage of play and the athlete may re-enter competition pursuant to the contest rules.

4. RETURN TO PLAY POLICY

Background: With the start of the 2010-11 school term, the NFHS implemented a new national playing rule regarding potential head injuries. The rule requires "any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional." In applying that rule in Illinois, it has been determined that only certified athletic trainers and physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois can clear an athlete to return to play the day of a contest in which the athlete has been removed from the contest for a possible head injury. In cases when an athlete is not cleared to return to play the same day as he/she is removed from a contest following a possible head injury (i.e., concussion), the athlete shall not return to play or

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practice until the athlete is evaluated by and receives written clearance from a licensed healthcare provider to return to play. For the purposes of this policy, licensed health care providers consist of physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers working in conjunction with physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.

5. Following the contest, a Concussion Special Report must be filed by the contest official(s) with the IESA Office through the Officials Center.
6. In cases where an assigned IESA state finals event medical professional is present, his/her decision to not allow an athlete to return to competition may not be overruled.

MANDATORY CONCUSSION COURSE FOR COACHES

Senate Bill 7 (Public Act 99-245) amends the School Code and will go in to effect for the 2016-2017 school year. The legislation requires ALL interscholastic athletic coaches to take a training course from an authorized provider at least once every 2 years. The IESA makes the IHSA online concussion awareness and education program available to IESA member schools through the IESA Member Center. The program includes information on concussion awareness training, concussion recognition, best practices for avoiding concussions, return to play guidelines, and sub-concussive trauma. The presentation and other supplementary materials included in the presentation should be reviewed by ALL interscholastic athletic coaches prior to taking a required exam over the curriculum.

CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET



**HEADS UP
CONCUSSION**

This sheet has information to help protect your children or teens from concussion or other serious brain injury. Use this information at your children's or teens' games and practices to learn how to spot a concussion and what to do if a concussion occurs.

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.



HOW CAN I SPOT A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION?

Children and teens who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below—or simply say they just “don’t feel right” after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body—may have a concussion or other serious brain injury.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR COACHES

- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent.
- Moves clumsily.
- Answers questions slowly.
- Loses consciousness (even briefly).
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes.
- Can’t recall events prior to or after a hit or fall.

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY CHILDREN AND TEENS

- Headache or “pressure” in head.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision.
- Bothered by light or noise.
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy.
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems.
- Just not “feeling right,” or “feeling down.”

WHAT ARE SOME MORE SERIOUS DANGER SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR?

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form on the brain after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and can squeeze the brain against the skull. Call 9-1-1 or take your child or teen to the emergency department right away if, after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, he or she has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other.
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up.
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away.
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination.
- Repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching).
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation.
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD OR TEEN HAS A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION?

As a parent, if you think your child or teen may have a concussion, you should:

1. Remove your child or teen from play.
2. Keep your child or teen out of play the day of the injury. Your child or teen should be seen by a health care provider and only return to play with permission from a health care provider who is experienced in evaluating for concussion.
3. Ask your child's or teen's health care provider for written instructions on helping your child or teen return to school. You can give the instructions to your child's or teen's school nurse and teacher(s) and return-to-play instructions to the coach and/or athletic trainer.

Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Only a health care provider should assess a child or teen for a possible concussion. Concussion signs and symptoms often show up soon after the injury. But you may not know how serious the concussion is at first, and some symptoms may not show up for hours or days.

The brain needs time to heal after a concussion. A child's or teen's return to school and sports should be a gradual process that is carefully managed and monitored by a health care provider.

HOW CAN I HELP KEEP MY CHILDREN OR TEENS SAFE?

Sports are a great way for children and teens to stay healthy and can help them do well in school. To help lower your children's or teens' chances of getting a concussion or other serious brain injury, you should:

- Help create a culture of safety for the team.
 - » Work with their coach to teach ways to lower the chances of getting a concussion.
 - » Talk with your children or teens about concussion and ask if they have concerns about reporting a concussion. Talk with them about their concerns; emphasize the importance of reporting concussions and taking time to recover from one.
 - » Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
 - » Tell your children or teens that you expect them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- When appropriate for the sport or activity, teach your children or teens that they must wear a helmet to lower the chances of the most serious types of brain or head injury. However, there is no "concussion-proof" helmet. So, even with a helmet, it is important for children and teens to avoid hits to the head.



TO LEARN MORE GO TO >> cdc.gov/HEADSUP

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↳ www.facebook.com/CDCHEADSUP

Content Source: CDC's HEADS UP campaign. Customizable HEADS UP fact sheets were made possible through a grant to the CDC Foundation from the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE).



Student/Parent Consent and Acknowledgements

By signing this form, we acknowledge we have been provided information regarding concussions.

Student

Student Name (Print): _____ Grade: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent and/or Legal Guardian

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Each year, IESA member schools are required to keep a signed acknowledgement and consent form on file for all student athletes.