

Concussion Action Plan (June 2013)

Florida High School Athletic Association
1801 NW 80 Blvd., Gainesville, FL 32606

June 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: FHSAA Member Schools

FROM: Dr. Roger Dearing, FHSAA Executive Director
Justin Harrison, FHSAA Assistant Executive Director for Athletic Services
Gary Pigott, FHSAA Senior Director of Athletics

SUBJECT: FHSAA Concussion Action Plan

The following is the standard concussion information we will provide to FHSAA member schools, contest officials, health-care professionals, media and parents. We will review this information with the FHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and the FHSAA Board of Directors for their approval. Any amendments will be made at that time. Please contact us if you have any additional questions.

NFHS Rules Book Language:

Any athlete 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 or practice and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

Definition of Appropriate Health-Care Professional:

“An interscholastic student-athlete who has been removed from play **due to a suspected concussion**, may not return to play until the student-athlete is evaluated by a licensed health-care professional familiar in the evaluation and management of concussion and receives written clearance to return to play from the appropriate health-care professional.”

In Florida, the FHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee defines an appropriate health-care professional (AHCP) as either a licensed physician (MD, as per Chapter 458, Florida Statutes), a licensed osteopathic physician (DO, as per Chapter 459, Florida Statutes),

Definition of an Athletic Trainer:

An Athletic Trainer is a recognized health care professional (ATC, as per Chapter 468, Florida Statutes) and practices under a written operational protocol (defined in sub chapter 468.713, Florida Statutes). Athletic training encompasses the prevention, diagnosis and intervention of emergency, acute and chronic medical conditions involving impairment, functional limitations and disabilities.

Consistent with the American Academy of Neurology and other organizations, it is recommended that an AHCP or an athletic trainer is present at all sporting events, including practices, where athletes are at risk for concussion or for those classified as a collision sport, whenever possible.

Mechanics for Removal from Athletic Contest:

The NFHS concussion rule calls for the immediate removal of the participant from the contest or practice. The revised language reflects an increasing focus on safety, given that the vast majority of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness. However, the revised language does not create a duty that officials are expected to perform a medical diagnosis. The change in this rule simply calls for officials to be cognizant of athletes who display signs, symptoms or behaviors of a concussion (see NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion) and remove them from play. At that point, the official's job is done. It is important to note that the responsibility of the official is limited to activities that occur on the field, court, or mat.

Once the participant has been removed from a contest due to a suspected concussion, the coach, school and appropriate health-care professional(s) assume full responsibility for that athlete's further evaluation and safety. If available, an athletic trainer can perform the sideline evaluation of a student-athlete. If a concussion is suspected, the athlete must be further evaluated by an AHCP according to policy and return to activity will require written clearance from ACHP. If after sideline evaluation, it is determined the athlete does not demonstrate symptoms

consistent with a concussion the ATC will follow procedures within a written operational protocol to determine return to play. In this situation, the athlete should continue to be monitored for any delayed onset of concussion symptoms and must be removed from activity immediately, if necessary.

Return To Play (RTP) Criteria: Suggested Concussion Management

No athlete should return to play (RTP) or practice on the same day of a suspected concussion. "When in doubt, sit them out!"

Any athlete suspected of having a concussion must be evaluated by an appropriate health-care as soon as possible and practical.

Any athlete who has sustained a concussion must be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional (as defined above) prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.

After evaluation and examination by an AHCP, return to play must follow a step-wise protocol as defined by the FHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and under the supervision of an AHCP, athletic trainer, coach or other health care professional.

A written medical clearance from an AHCP is required for return to competition.

Education on Management of Concussions:

All FHSAA member school head coaches and paid/supplemented coaches are required to view the FREE online education course "*Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know*". This NFHS concussion course may be viewed online at www.nfhslearn.com. All member school personnel, contest officials, student-athletes and parents are encouraged to educate themselves by viewing the FREE online education course as well.

This plan was recommended at the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee Meeting on September 1, 2010 and revised at the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee Meeting on March 12, 2012, further updates occurred on June 11, 2013. The FHSAA Board of Directors adopted the policy in June, 2011. Gary Pigott, FHSAA Senior Director of Athletics, is a member of the Florida Concussion Task Force.