



## IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR COACHES ABOUT CONCUSSIONS

### ❖ WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes your head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

### ❖ WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

These signs and symptoms may indicate that a concussion has occurred.

- **Signs observed by others**
  - Appears dazed or stunned
  - Is confused
  - Forgets an instruction
  - Moves clumsily
  - Answers questions slowly
  - Loses consciousness (even briefly)
  - Shows behavior or personality changes
  - Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
  - Can't recall events after hit or fall
- **Symptoms reported by the athlete**
  - Headache or “pressure” in head
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Balance problems or dizziness
  - Double or blurry vision
  - Sensitivity to light and/or noise
  - Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
  - Concentration or memory problems
  - Confusion
  - Does not “feel right”

### ❖ ACTION PLAN

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, you should take the following steps:

- Remove the athlete from play.
- Ensure that athlete is evaluated by a healthcare professional. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
- Inform the athlete's parent, guardian or care provider about the possible concussion. Let him/her know that the athlete will not be allowed to return to play until evaluated by a healthcare professional.
  - Give the parent, guardian or care provider the “Concussion Letter to Parents, Guardians or Care Providers,” which includes a concussion fact sheet on page 2.
- Return to play is a medical decision.
  - Either of the following must occur:
    - The athlete must sit out for a minimum of 7 consecutive days AND a healthcare provider must provide written clearance for the athlete to return to play
    - Or, a healthcare provider must determine that the athlete did not suffer a concussion and provide written clearance for the athlete to return to play immediately (no 7 day wait is necessary)
- Allow athlete to return to play **ONLY** after you have received a note from the healthcare professional giving the athlete permission to return to play.

### ❖ REMEMBER THE THREE KEY PHRASES

- When in doubt, keep 'em out!
  - If you suspect a concussion, keep the athlete out of play until he/she is cleared by a healthcare professional.
- Stand tall. Make the call.
  - A good coach errs on the side of caution.
- No play without okay.
  - Don't let a concussed athlete return to play without medical clearance.