

# Concussion Education

What you, as a Special Olympics Oregon coach, need to know to keep our athletes safe

***Special Olympics***  
Oregon



# Coach Concussion Training



Concussions can result in long-term physical, mental, and emotional problems

You can't always prevent a head injury in sports, but there are things you can do, as a coach, to give your athletes the best chance of recovery if a concussion happens

After this training, you'll know:

- ▶ How to recognize a concussion
- ▶ How to respond to a concussion



# What is a Concussion?

Concussions are 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 a person's head to move rapidly back and forth

- ▶ Concussions include “bell ringers” and “dings”

All concussions are potentially serious

Concussions can cause short-term and long-term problems

After a concussion, you may see physical, emotional and cognitive changes

No sport is immune to the possibility of concussions

# How Does a Concussion Occur?



A bump, blow or jolt to the head can cause a concussion

An athlete doesn't have to be hit in the head to have a concussion

A forceful collision with another player or the ground can cause a concussion

An athlete doesn't have to be knocked unconscious to have a concussion

- ▶ 9 out of 10 concussions do not include a loss of consciousness

# Observing your Players



Concussions can happen any time in any sport

Concussions have many different symptoms

- ▶ Some symptoms aren't very obvious

It's important to observe your athletes and to know what to watch for

Be sure to have equipment that properly fits your players and is appropriate for the sport

# Concussion Symptoms



Headache

Neck pain

Pressure sensation

Double or fuzzy vision

Balance problems

Dizziness

Memory problems

Sluggishness

Feeling foggy

Sensitivity to light and/or noise

Nausea

Sleep problems

Difficulty concentrating

# Things to Watch for if you Think an Athlete has a Concussion



Appears dazed or stunned

Seems confused

Forgets plays or instructions

Is unsure about game, score or opponent

Moves clumsily (altered coordination)

Exhibits balance problems

Shows changes in mood, behavior or personality

Responds slowly to questions

Forgets events before or after the hit/fall/injury

Loses consciousness

# When does a Concussion Require Emergency Medical Attention?



If a concussion is serious enough, an athlete may require immediate medical attention

Rush an athlete to an emergency department immediately if an athlete:

- ▶ loses consciousness
- ▶ is persistently vomiting
- ▶ is increasingly more confused or restless



# Three Phrases to Remember



Remember the three simple phrases to know what to do if you suspect a concussion

- ▶ When in doubt, keep 'em out.
  - ▶ If you suspect a concussion, keep them out until you have received clearance from the athlete's healthcare provider
- ▶ Stand tall. Make the call.
  - ▶ A good coach errs on the side of caution
- ▶ No play without okay.
  - ▶ Don't let any concussed athlete return to play without medical clearance
  - ▶ Don't let them play, even with medical clearance, if you are still noticing signs and symptoms

# Reporting a Concussion



If you suspect that an athlete has suffered a concussion:

- ▶ Provide a letter to the athlete's parent, guardian or care provider
  - ▶ This letter instructs the athlete that they must see a healthcare provider and receive medical clearance before returning to play.
- ▶ Complete a Special Olympics Incident Report form
  - ▶ Send to your local program LPC or Sports Manager within 72 hours of the incident

# Returning an Athlete to Play



## 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)
- ▶ The athlete **MUST HAVE** a note from a healthcare provider before he/she can play again
  - ▶ This note must be sent to your local program LPC or Sports Manager for inclusion in the athlete's file

## An athlete must be free of all symptoms **AND** be cleared by a healthcare provider

- ▶ If an athlete is cleared by a healthcare provider, but you still notice that he/she is exhibiting symptoms, pull him/her from play and repeat the reporting process



# Return to Play Progression

Cognitive and physical rest are both needed to heal from a concussion

Every concussion is different and a healthcare provider will provide specific instructions to return the athlete to play

Coaches must follow the instructions of the healthcare provider to ensure the athlete doesn't experience a second injury

- ▶ This may include gradually increasing the athlete's intensity upon return to the sport

# Concussion Education Review



## Follow the game plan

- ▶ If you suspect an athlete has a concussion, keep them out of the game
- ▶ Complete the correct paperwork and inform the athlete's parent, guardian or care provider
- ▶ Do not let the athlete play again until he/she has been cleared by a healthcare provider and you have a note stating that the athlete can return to play

## Remember the three phrases!

- ▶ When in doubt, keep 'em out.
- ▶ Stand tall. Make the call.
- ▶ No play without okay.



# Resources for Coaches

The following resources are to help you, as a Special Olympics Oregon coach, know what to look for when you suspect an athlete has sustained a concussion and to report the suspicion

- ▶ Special Olympics Incident Report Form - [Link to incident report form](#)
- ▶ Parent Letter and Fact Sheet - [Link to parent letter and fact sheet](#)
- ▶ Clipboard Sheet for Coaches - [Link to coaches' clipboard sheet](#)
- ▶ For more information about concussions, please see the Centers for Disease Control's Head's Up coaches' training - [Link to CDC Head's Up training](#)

To complete the quiz and receive credit  
for completing the Concussion  
Education course, click the link below:  
[Concussion Training Quiz](#)

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