

Concussion Management Protocol

The health of the young athletes in the Gordon Athletic Association (GAA) is of the utmost importance to the GAA Board of Directors and Coaches. Based on recent changes in research and understanding of concussions and concussion management in the medical community, many youth organizations have developed Concussion Care Programs. In accordance with this growing trend, the GAA Board of Directors would like to introduce our own Concussion Management Protocol for all sports.

Definition: A concussion is an injury to the brain which is often caused by a traumatic blow, jolt or shaking of the head, which can cause physical and mental changes. Loss of consciousness does not necessarily occur when someone has sustained a concussion.

Coaches/Parents Observation of Symptoms:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Appears confused or disoriented
- Forgetfulness
- Is not aware of the game situation
- Moves clumsily
- Answers question slowly
- Loss of consciousness
- Personality changes
- Cannot recall events prior to and/or after the incident

Athlete Reported Symptoms:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Balance issues or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Light and/or noise sensitivity
- Feeling sluggish, hazy or foggy

- Confusion
- Concentration/memory problems
- “I do not feel right”

Action Plan:

1. The athlete who is suspected of having sustained a concussion secondary to the symptoms exhibited/observed will not be permitted to return to play the day of the injury.
2. The athlete must be cleared to return to play after evaluation by a physician who is trained in concussion management and has documentation of this release.
3. The athlete completes a 5 Stage Return-to-Play Protocol:

Stage 1: Light aerobic exercise
5-10 minutes on a stationary bike, walking, or light jogging to increase the athlete's heart rate.
Stage 2: Sport specific exercise
These include moderate jogging, running and low non-contact intensity sport specific drills.
Stage 3: Non-contact training drills
Add heavy non-contact physical activity, including sprinting and non-contact sport specific drills for 60 minutes or more.
Stage 4: Full contact practice
Athlete may return to full contact in controlled practice for 60 minutes or more.
Stage 5: Return to Play
The athlete may return to full sport competition.

To progress from one stage to the next, the athlete must be asymptomatic during the stage and for 24 hours after the completion of the activity. If symptoms re-occur at any point during the 5 Stage Return to Play Program, the athlete must start over with Stage 1 and progress accordingly.