



## **GHSAA CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL**

### **BY-LAW 2.68**

**GHSAA CONCUSSION POLICY:** In accordance with Georgia law and national playing rules published by the NFHS, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest and shall not return to play until an appropriate health care professional has determined that no concussion has occurred.

### ***OVERT SIGNS OF POSSIBLE CONCUSSION***

- ❖ Player loses consciousness
- ❖ Player appears dazed or stunned
  - ❖ Player confused about assignments
  - ❖ Is unsure of score, opponent, etc.
- ❖ Can't recall events before/after hit
- ❖ Moves clumsily; experiences dizziness
- ❖ Shows personality/behavior changes
- ❖ Unusual sensitivity to lights and sounds
- ❖ Experiences nausea and headache

### **SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION**

- ❖ Headache and/or nausea after head trauma
- ❖ Balance and/or vision problems
  - ❖ dizziness; double vision
  - ❖ severe sensitivity to light and sound
- ❖ Cognitive processing problems
  - ❖ Lessened concentration or memory
  - ❖ Physical sluggishness with confusion about present situation

## **MEDICAL EVALUATION**

- ❖ Neither officials, nor coaches, are expected to “diagnose” a concussion, as that is the job of an appropriate health-care professional
- ❖ The official is not responsible for the sideline evaluation or management of the athlete after he or she is removed from play
- ❖ These evaluations are to be done by “appropriate medical professionals”.

## **Appropriate Health Care Professional**

- Must have received training in concussion evaluation and management
- Licensed Physician (MD/DO)
- Certified Athletic Trainer
- A licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician,
  - Nurse Practitioner
  - Physician Assistant

## **GAME/PRACTICE PROTOCOL**

- No athlete is allowed to return to a game or a practice on the same day that a concussion
  - has been diagnosed,
  - OR cannot be ruled out.
- Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion must be cleared medically by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in any future practice or contest.
- The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol shall be a part of the medical clearance for future return to play.
- An second head injury before the brain has had time to heal can increase damage to the brain.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROTOCOL**

- *It is mandatory that every coach in each GHSA sport participate in a free, online course on concussion management prepared by the NFHS and available at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) at least every two years – beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.*
- *Each school will be responsible for monitoring the participation of its coaches in the concussion management course, and shall keep a record of those who participate.*

**Concussion In Sports - What You Need To Know**

**Concussions affect 4 Areas of Functionality**

- The way the person feels
  - May cause headache or fatigue
- How they think
  - May affect memory or concentration
- Change in emotions
  - May become irritable or sad
- Problems with sleep
  - Trouble falling asleep

A concussion affects the brain in 4 separate areas of function: the way the person feels, how they think, their emotions, and problems with sleep.

## ACCESSING COURSE

- Go to [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)
- Click on **“Courses”** at the top of the home page
- Go to the column entitled **“Free Courses”**
- Click on **“Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know”**
- Be certain to print out the completion form at the end of the presentation so your school Athletic Director can track the compliance of all coaches.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROTOCOL

- Distribute to every athlete and his/her parent/guardian an information sheet that includes:
  - the dangers of concussion injuries,
  - the signs/symptoms of concussion
  - and the concussion management protocol outlined in this by-law.
- This sheet must be signed by the parent/guardian of each athlete.
- This form is available at [www.ghsa.net](http://www.ghsa.net) among the forms included in the **“Resources”** section.

## GHS A FORM – PART A

### STUDENT/PARENT CONCUSSION AWARENESS FORM

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

#### DANGERS OF CONCUSSION

Concussions at all levels of sports have received a great deal of attention and a state law has been passed to address this issue. Adolescent athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussion. Once considered little more than a minor “ding” to the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in death, or changes in brain function (either short-term or long-term). A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. Continued participation in any sport following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as well as increased risk for further injury to the brain, and even death.

Player and parental education in this area is crucial – that is the reason for this document. Refer to it regularly. This form must be signed by a parent or guardian of each student who wishes to participate in GHSA athletics. One copy needs to be returned to the school, and one retained at home.

## GHSA FORM – PART B

- **COMMON SIGNS /SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION**
- ❖ Headache, dizziness, poor balance, moves clumsily, reduced energy level/tiredness
- ❖ Nausea or vomiting
- ❖ Blurred vision, sensitivity to light and sounds
- ❖ Fogginess of memory, difficulty concentrating, slowed thought processes, confused about surroundings or game assignments
- ❖ Unexplained changes in behavior and personality
- ❖ Loss of consciousness (NOTE: This does not occur in all concussion episodes.)

## GHSA FORM – PART C

**BY-LAW 2.68: GHSA CONCUSSION POLICY:** In accordance with Georgia law and national playing rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest and shall not return to play until an appropriate health care professional has determined that no concussion has occurred. (NOTE: An appropriate health care professional may include, licensed physician (MD/DO) or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and management.)

No athlete is allowed to return to a game or a practice on the same day that a concussion (a) has been diagnosed, OR (b) cannot be ruled out.

Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion shall be cleared medically by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in any future practice or contest. The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol shall be a part of the medical clearance.

It is mandatory that every coach in each GHSA sport participate in a free, online course on concussion management prepared by the NFHS and available at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) at least every two years – beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

Each school will be responsible for monitoring the participation of its coaches in the concussion management course, and shall keep a record of those who participate.

***I HAVE READ THIS FORM AND I UNDERSTAND THE FACTS PRESENTED IN IT.***

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student) (Parent or Guardian)

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_