



# Collingwood United Soccer Club

## Concussion Policy

### Introduction

The Collingwood United Soccer Club (CUSC) is committed to maintaining an environment in which the safety and well-being of all parties is a priority. This includes the use and enforcement of the following with the intention of avoiding and/or minimizing concussions while playing sport:

- A zero-tolerance policy for prohibited play at all levels that is considered high risk for causing concussions.
- The *Player Code of Conduct*, *Parent or Guardian Code of Conduct*, and *Coach and Officials Code of Conduct*.
- The *Removal from Sport Protocol* and *Return to Sport Protocol* as well as other measures as laid out in the [Canada Soccer Guide to Safety](#).

### What is a concussion?

- A concussion is a brain injury that can't be seen on x-rays, CT or MRI scans. It affects the way an athlete thinks and can cause a variety of symptoms.

### What causes a concussion?

- Any blow to the head, face or neck, or somewhere else on the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion.

### When should I suspect a concussion?

- A concussion should be suspected in any athlete who sustains a significant impact to the head, face, neck, or body and reports **any** symptoms or demonstrates **any** visual signs of a concussion.
- A concussion should also be suspected if an athlete reports **any** concussion symptoms to one of their peers, parents, teachers, or coaches or if anyone witnesses an athlete exhibiting **any** of the visual signs of concussion.

### How long will it take for the athlete to recover?

- Most athletes who sustain a concussion will make a complete recovery within 1 to 2 weeks while most youth athletes will recover within 1 to 4 weeks.
- Approximately 15 to 30% of patients will experience persistent symptoms (>2 weeks for adults; >4 weeks for youth) that may require additional medical assessment and management.

## What are the symptoms of a concussion?

- Some athletes will develop symptoms immediately while others will develop delayed symptoms (beginning 24 to 48 hours after the injury).
- headaches or head pressure
- dizziness
- nausea and vomiting
- blurred or fuzzy vision
- sensitivity to light or sound
- balance problems
- feeling tired or having no energy
- not thinking clearly
- feeling slowed down
- easily upset or angered
- sadness
- nervousness or anxiety
- feeling more emotional
- sleeping more or less
- having a hard time falling asleep
- difficulty working on a computer
- difficulty reading
- difficulty learning new information

## What are the visual signs of a concussion?

- lying motionless on the playing surface
- slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- disorientation or confusion or inability to respond appropriately to questions
- blank or vacant stare
- balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow labored movements
- facial injury after head trauma
- clutching head

## Policy

- It is mandatory that each year, all players, parents/guardians of players under 18, technical leads, coaches, assistant coaches, team managers and officials review Ontario's Concussion Awareness Resources which can be accessed at the following link:

[Rowan's Law: Concussion Awareness Resources](#)

- It is mandatory that each year, all players, parents/guardians, coaches and team officials review their applicable Code of Conduct that sets out rules of behaviour to support concussion prevention.

[CUSC Codes of Conduct](#)

- It is mandatory that each year, all players, parents/guardians, technical leads, coaches, assistant coaches, team managers and other volunteers read and familiarize themselves with the CUSC's concussion protocols as outlined herein.

## Removal from Sport Protocol

### Designated Person(s)

In accordance with the requirements set out in *Rowan's Law* and its associated regulation, every sport organization is required to identify a Designated Person(s) as having specific responsibilities under the Removal from Sport and Return to Sport protocols. The responsibilities for the Designated Person(s) may be shared between one or more individuals.

Under the Removal from Sport protocol for the CUSC, the Designated Persons are those that will be present and in a position of authority during training, practice or competition, including:

- coaches and assistant coaches;
- team managers; and
- technical staff.

### Process

The following outlines a process for immediate removal of an athlete who is suspected of having sustained a concussion.

#### 1. Remove the Athlete

Designated Person(s) to immediately remove the athlete from further training, practice or competition if the athlete has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion regardless of whether the concussion or suspected concussion was sustained from an activity associated with CUSC.

#### 2. Call 911 if Emergency

Designated Person(s) to call 911 if in their opinion, doing so is necessary (eg. if there is an emergency and any red flag signs and/or symptoms appear).

#### 3. Inform

If the athlete is under 18 years of age, Designated Person(s) to inform the athlete's parent or guardian about the removal from further training, practice or competition.

Designated Person(s) to advise the athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, that the athlete is required to undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner before the athlete will be permitted to return to training, practice or competition.

A medical assessment determines whether the athlete has a concussion. An athlete will not be permitted to return to training, practice or competition until they receive medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner to do so.

4. Give Protocols

Designated Person(s) to provide the athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, with CUSC Removal from Sport and Return to Sport protocols as soon as possible after the athlete has been removed from further training, practice or competition.

5. Record the Incident

Make and keep a record of incidences where an athlete is removed from further training, practice or competition because they are suspected of having sustained a concussion regardless of whether the athlete is later diagnosed with a concussion.

6. Returning to Training, Practice or Competition

Once removed, the athlete is not permitted to return to training, practice or competition, except in accordance with the CUSC Return to Sport protocol.

## Return to Sport Protocol

### Designated Person(s)

In accordance with the requirements set out in *Rowan's Law* and its associated regulation, every sport organization is required to identify a Designated Person(s) as having specific responsibilities under the Removal from Sport and Return to Sport protocols. The responsibilities for the Designated Person(s) may be shared between one or more individuals.

Under the Return to Sport protocol for the CUSC, the Designated Persons include:

- Club president or vice-president;
- Club technical director; and
- Club administrator.

The Designated Persons may rely on the information received from an athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, in carrying out their responsibilities under the CUSC Return to Sport protocol.

Under the Return to Sport protocol, team coaches, assistant coaches or managers are not considered Designated Persons and thus cannot provide direction regarding return to play.

### Process

The following outlines a return to sport process for an athlete who has been removed from training, practice or competition due to a suspected or diagnosed concussion, regardless of whether or not the concussion was sustained or is suspected of having been sustained during a sport activity associated with the CUSC.

#### 1. Receive Confirmation

Ensure that an athlete who has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion does not return to training, practice or competition until the athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, provides confirmation to the Designated Person(s) that the athlete:

- a. has undergone a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner and has not been diagnosed as having a concussion; and
- b. has been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition by the physician or nurse practitioner.

#### 2. If Diagnosed with Having a Concussion

If an athlete has been diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner as having a concussion, the athlete must proceed through the graduated return to sport steps.

Students in elementary and secondary school with a diagnosed concussion must follow their school board’s return to school plan, which supports a student’s gradual return to learning and return to physical activity. Contact the school for more information.

### 3. Graduated Return to Sport Steps

The graduated return to sport steps may include the activities noted in the following table.

Step	Activities	Goal of Step	Duration
<b>Step 1: Symptom-limiting activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ daily activities that do not make symptoms worse, such as moving around the home and simple chores</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ gradual reintroduction of daily school, and work activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ at least 24 hours</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2: Light aerobic activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ light activities such as walking or stationary bicycle at slow to medium pace for 10–15 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ increase heart rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ at least 24 hours</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3: Sport-specific exercise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ individual physical activity such as running</li> <li>▪ no contact or head impact activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ add movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ at least 24 hours</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4: Non-contact training, practice drills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ harder training drills</li> <li>▪ add resistance training (if appropriate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ exercise, coordination and increased thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ at least 24 hours</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5: Unrestricted training &amp; practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ unrestricted training and practice, with contact where applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ restore confidence and assess functional skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ at least 24 hours</li> <li>▪ medical clearance required before unrestricted training, practice or competition</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6: Return to Sport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ unrestricted competition</li> </ul>		

It is typically recommended that an athlete with concussion rest for 24 to 48 hours before beginning Step 1. An athlete is typically ready to progress to the next step when they can do the activities at their current step without new or worsening symptoms. If at any step symptoms get worse, they should stop and return to the previous step before trying again. If symptoms do not improve or if the symptoms continue to worsen, the athlete should return to the physician or nurse practitioner.

It is important to note that typical recovery times vary from person to person, and that some individuals may require more time to progress through the graduated return to sport steps.

4. Share Medical Advice

An athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, must share the medical advice or recommendations they receive with the Designated Person(s) before being permitted to return to training, practice or competition through the graduated return to sport steps, if any.

5. Disclosing Diagnosis

The Designated Person(s) must inform the athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, of the importance of disclosing the diagnosis to any other sport organization with which the athlete is registered or school that the athlete attends

6. Medical Clearance

The athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, must provide the designated person(s) a confirmation of medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner before the athlete is permitted to move on to unrestricted training, practice or competition.

7. Record Progression

The sport organization must make and keep a record of the athlete's progression through the graduated return to sport steps until the athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, has provided a confirmation of medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner to the Designated Person(s).