OLYMPIC SPORTS & SPINE
In affiliation with MultiCare

RETURN TO SPORT / RETURN TO LEARN:
CONCUSSION



Coaches, Athletic Directors and Tournament Directors:

In May 2009 the Washington State Legislature passed the Zackery Lystedt Law so that youth athletes are pulled from practice or game if there is a suspected head injury. The WIAA has the following statement under concussion management "a youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time. A youth athlete who has been removed from play may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider."

As licensed health care providers, Athletic Trainers are one of the health care providers that are trained in the evaluation and management of a concussion. Athletic Trainers are well-versed in all levels of concussion management. Most athletes with a concussion will recover or see significantimprovement in symptoms in the first 7-10 days. Below are the guidelines that have been published by numerous organizations regarding the Return to Sport and Return to Learn aspect of concussion management. These are also the guidelines that Olympic Sports and Spine follows for all athletes and patients.

Return to Learn

PHASE 1
- No school - complete cognitive test
- Rest at home, avoid screen time
- Limit cognitive stress, no homework

PHASE 2
- School work at home
- Trial of short assignments (15-30 minutes at a time)
- Avoid increase in symptoms, no tests or quizzes

PHASE 3
- Partial school attendance (with accomodations)
- Core classes, breaks in quiet area, no tests/quizzes

PHASE 4
- Full school attendance (with accomodations)
- Goal to attend full day with limited breaks
- Limit tests and quizzes to one per day

PHASE 5
- Full school attendance (without accomodations)
- Slowly reincorporate testing and quizzes
- Introduction of Return to Play for Athletics

PHASE 6
- Full return to school and athletics

***** Every student-athlete will not necessarily need to go through each phase in their Return to Learn program. There will be individual variability, so flexibility is important. In some cases of mild symptoms, student athletes may not require a Return to Learn plan.

Return to Sport

STEP 1
- Athlete's symptoms are not exacerbated by daily activities. Athlete allowed to perform light aerobic activity (e.g. walking, stationary bike).

STEP 2
A - 20-30 Minutes Light Aerobic Activity at less than 55% max HR
B - 20-30 minutes Moderate Aerobic Activity less than 70% max HR

STEP 3
- Sport-specific conditioning
- 20-30 minutes of intense activity (may including biking, running, sprinting, sport conditioning, agility drills, weightlifting)

***** Steps 4-6 should begin after the resolution of any symptoms, abnormalities in cognitive function, and any other clinical findings related to the current concussion, including with and after physical exertion.

STEP 4
- Light practice
- Non-contact practice drills at full speed

(wearing appropriate sport equipment)

STEP 5
- Full practice / Return to full contact practice

STEP 6
- Competition / Return to full competition

***** Each step requires 24 hours before advancing to the next step. During steps 1-3 athlete can have mild and brief exacerbation of symptoms (an increase of NO more than 2 points on a 0-10 scale, for less than an hour). Steps 4-6 athlete must remain symptom free.