

**Concussion Guidelines**  
**For All AAA Member Schools**  
**Adopted August 4, 2010 by AAA Board of Directors**

- 1. No athlete should return to play or practice on the same day of a concussion.**
- 2. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional that day (MD, DO, Nurse Practitioner, Certified Athletic Trainer, or Physician Assistant).**
- 3. Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.**
- 4. After medical clearance, return to play should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for delayed return to play based upon the return of any signs or symptoms.**

**ARKANSAS ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION**  
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TO: Arkansas Activities Association Member Schools  
FROM: Joey Walters, Ed. D.  
Deputy Executive Director  
DATE: August 4, 2010  
RE: Concussion Rule

Concussions at all levels of sports have received a great deal of attention in the past few years. The attention has increased even more so over the past year, culminating with the NFL, NCAA, and NFHS testifying before the U. S. Congress about what each organization is doing to protect athletes from concussions. Over the past year and a half the Arkansas Activities Association has taken a proactive stance by providing our member schools with educational resources dealing with concussions. During the 2009-2010 school year, the AAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee recognized concussion as our Sports Medicine Point of Emphasis. Concussion awareness was included in all required sports rules meetings.

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. Most concussed athletes do not lose consciousness, yet they often show other common signs, symptoms and behaviors of concussion. Adolescent athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussion. Once considered little more than a minor “ding” on the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in short- and long-term changes in brain function. Continued participation in any sport following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as well as further injury to the brain – and even death. The AAA strongly believes that student athletes who show signs/symptoms of a concussion should be removed from play.

The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (composed of leading doctors, athletic trainers, research specialists and state association staff) developed new guidelines for concussion management of a student exhibiting signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion. Those guidelines will go into all NFHS rules books and will be in effect starting with the 2010 – 2011 school year. They have also been included in all required AAA sports rules meetings. The language will read:

***Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.***

Behavior or signs observed indicative of a possible concussion:

- Loss of consciousness
- Appears dazed or stunned
- Appears confused
- Forgets plays
- Unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Cannot recall events prior to or after the injury

Symptoms reported by a player indicative of a possible concussion:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion

In order for the NFHS rule to be effective coaches, officials, administrators, and health-care professionals must know and recognize their roles. The rule calls for the immediate removal of the participant from the contest. It is important to note that the responsibility of the official is limited to activities that occur on the field, court, or mat. Once the participant has been removed from a contest due to a suspected concussion, the coach or appropriate health-care professional(s) assumes full responsibility for the athlete's further evaluation and safety.

The Arkansas Activities Association Board of Directors has adopted the following guidelines for dealing with a concussed student athlete:

- 1. No athlete should return to play or practice on the same day of a concussion.**
- 2. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional that day (MD, DO, Nurse Practitioner, Certified Athletic Trainer, or Physician Assistant).**
- 3. Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.**
- 4. After medical clearance, return to play should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for delayed return to play based upon the return of any signs or symptoms.**

The safety of the student athlete is of paramount concern during any athletic contest. The new rules adopted by the NFHS and the AAA should provide a framework for the effective recognition and management of a concussed student athlete. We encourage every coach and official to view the free new NFHS 20-minute online coaches education course – *Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know*, it is a useful tool for providing concussion education, the course also contains supplemental information from the NFHS and the CDC. The free course is also appropriate for administrators, health-care providers, parents, and students. It can be found at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) .

National Federation of State High School Associations



Coach Education Program

# Concussion in Sports

What You Need to Know

Available at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)

- Available at no cost to users
- Accessed 24/7/365 at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)
- Unlimited access for one year
- Complete in twenty (20) minutes
- Verify user completion using the "Coach Search" feature at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)
- Printable resources for coaches and parents provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

Courses currently available  
at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com):

#### CORE COURSES

Fundamentals of Coaching  
First Aid for Coaches

#### SPORT-SPECIFIC COURSES

Soccer (NSCAA)  
Wrestling (NWCA)  
Football (USAF)  
Volleyball (USAV)  
Spirit Safety (AACCA)  
Softball (ASA/USAS)

#### ELECTIVE COURSES

Effectively Engaging with Parents  
Teaching & Modeling Behavior  
Teaching Sports Skills  
NCAA Eligibility

#### Course Objectives:

- Educate coaches, parents, officials, and students about concussions
- Identify the signs and symptoms of concussions
- Understand the problems associated with concussions
- Explain the actions to take when a concussion is suspected
- Identify responsibilities of coaches, parents, officials, and students



**Mick Koester, M.D.**  
Chair, NFHS SMAC  
Course host