Concussion Procedure and Protocol

Concussion: a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. Medically, a concussion is a complex, pathophysiological event to the brain that is induced by trauma which may or may not involve a loss of consciousness (LOC). Concussion results in a constellation of physical, cognitive, emotional, and sleep-related symptoms. Signs or symptoms may last from several minutes to days, weeks, months or even longer in some cases.

CONCUSSION SIGNS, SYMPTOMS, AND MANAGEMENT AT TRAINING AND COMPETITION

Step 1

Did a concussion occur?

Evaluate the player and note if any of the following signs and/or symptoms are present:
(1) Dazed look or confusion about what happened.
(2) Memory difficulties.
(3) Neck pain, headaches, nausea, vomiting, double vision, blurriness, ringing noise or sensitive to sounds.
(4) Short attention span. Can’t keep focused.
(5) Slow reaction time, slurred speech, bodily movements are lagging, fatigue, and slowly answer questions or have difficulty answering questions.
(6) Abnormal physical and/or mental behavior.
(7) Coordination skills are behind, ex: balancing, dizziness, clumsiness, reaction time.

Step 2:

Is emergency treatment needed?

This would include the following scenarios:
(1) Spine or neck injury or pain.
(2) Behavior patterns change, unable to recognize people/places, less responsive than usual.
(3) Loss of consciousness.
(4) Headaches that worsen
(5) Seizures
(6) Very drowsy, can’t be awakened
(7) Repeated vomiting
(8) Increasing confusion or irritability
(9) Weakness, numbness in arms and legs
Step 3:

If a possible concussion occurred, but no emergency treatment is needed, what should be done now?

Focus on these areas every 5-10 min for the next 1 - 2 hours, without returning to any activities:

2. Speech.
3. Memory, instructions, and responses.
4. Attention on topics, details, confusion, ability to concentrate.
5. State of consciousness
6. Mood, behavior, and personality
7. Headache or “pressure” in head
8. Nausea or vomiting
9. Sensitivity to light and noise

If parent is not present, the coach/ team official or other designated adult should watch for the above symptoms. Players shall not re-enter competition, training, or partake in any activities for at least 24 hours. Even if there are no signs or symptoms after 15-20 min, activity should not be taken by the player.

Step 4:

If there is a possibility of a concussion, do the following:

1. If the parent/legal guardian is not present, then the coach or team official is responsible for notifying the parent/legal guardian ASAP by phone and email. When the parent/legal guardian is not present, the coach/team official must email the ODP Administrator of how and when the parent/legal guardian was notified.
2. Do not give the player any pain medication e.g. no ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin), Acetaminophen (Tylenol), Aleve, or aspirin.
3. Ensure that the player is evaluated by a health care professional if exhibiting one or more of the above symptoms.

Step 5:

A player diagnosed with a possible concussion may return to VT ODP play only after written release from a physician stating they are symptom free and cleared to return to play.

References:


Parent/Guardian Information: Please be aware of signs and symptoms that may arise which may require further evaluation and/or treatment.

It is common for a concussed player to have one or many concussion symptoms. There are four types of symptoms: physical, cognitive, emotional, and sleep.

If your player starts to show signs of these symptoms, or there are any other symptoms you notice about the behavior or conduct of your player, you should consider seeking immediate medical attention:

- Memory difficulties
- Headaches that worsen
- Vomiting
- Focus issues
- Less responsive than usual
- Neck pain
- Odd behavior
- Fatigued
- Slurred speech
- Seizures
- Sensitive to light or noise
- Repeats same answer/question
- Slow reactions
- Irritability
- Weakness/numbness in arms/legs

Please take the necessary precautions and seek a professional medical opinion before allowing your players to participate further. Until a professional medical opinion is provided, please consider the following guidelines:

- Refraining from participation in any activities the day of and the day after the occurrence.
- Refrain from taking any medication unless prescribed by medical provider
- Refraining from cognitive activities requiring concentration such as TV, video games, computer work, and text messaging, if they are causing symptoms.

If you are unclear and have questions about the above symptoms, please contact a medical physician.

Please be advised that a player who sustains a concussion may not return to play until VT ODP receives a signed medical clearance from a physician.

Athlete’s Information: If you are stable and recovering during the next 24 hours after concussion, you should rest for an additional day or two. As your symptoms go away, you can slowly begin to go back to your usual daily routine. All physical exertion should be avoided until you are cleared by your medical provider. Playing injured does not show courage or strength. Do not play through symptoms of concussion. **You should stay away from any activities that would risk re-injury. A second concussion before the first one has healed could be very serious and prolong your recovery.**

- There is no way to accurately predict how long the recovery process will take.
- During your recovery and when you still have symptoms, you must abide by complete physical and cognitive rest.
- It is critically important to be honest with yourself regarding your symptoms as returning too soon may result in a prolonged recovery time.
- Follow return to play guidelines by your physician
**After Medical Clearance/release:** Athlete should undergo an appropriate stepwise return to activity and tolerating exertion without symptoms.

If symptoms return when training, stop....wait until you are symptom free for 24 hours before returning to activity. If the symptoms return, contact medical provider.

**References:**


Fletcher Allen Health Care Concussion Task Force