

# OVIEDO HIGH SCHOOL CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

With the adoption of HB 291, Florida's youth athlete concussion bill, which went into effect on Sunday, July 1, 2012, Florida joins more than 30 states that have adopted concussion guidelines for youth sports.

***Bill HB 291, mandates that any athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury be immediately removed from practice or competition until the athlete receives written medical clearance to return from an appropriate health care practitioner.***

After a concussion, if an athlete continues to play or returns to play too early, there is a significant risk of experiencing another concussion. Repeat concussions may take longer to resolve and come with a risk of permanent neurological damage or, rarely, death. Children, adolescents and female athletes appear to be at a higher risk for concussions, and may also take longer to recover.

With the law, there is no same-day return to play. Rather, the ruling specifies a graduated return to exercise protocol (light aerobic activity, moderate aerobic activity, sport specific drills, full contact practice) that must be supervised and approved by a responsible coach or athletic trainer before a physician will give the final clearance to safely return to sport.

Baseline computerized neurocognitive testing is used to help establish the normal brain function of an athlete with respect to memory, reaction time, speed and concentration. When compared to a post-injury test, this is a helpful tool for a physician to determine when the brain has returned to normal and it is safe for an athlete to begin a return to play protocol. This non-invasive test is set up in "video-game" type format and takes about 20 minutes to complete.

## STEPS TO RETURN TO PLAY:

1. If an athlete is suspected having a concussion, he/she will be referred to the athletic trainer who will perform concussion testing. If the athletic trainer thinks that the athlete may have suffered a concussion, they will then have the athlete take the computerized ImPact concussion test. The athlete's scores will be compared to their individual baseline test, or in the case where there is no baseline, their scores will be compared to the average norm for their age.
2. If the athlete's signs, symptoms, and scores do not fall within the norms, they will be ***required BY LAW to see a physician***. Once the athlete has seen a physician and is feeling that all of their symptoms have resolved, they will then see the athletic trainers (or a concussion center) to retake the Impact Concussion Test. Once they achieve a passing score, they will then need to see a physician again to receive clearance and a return to play form. ***\*\*\* If the athlete is seen by Dr. McCleary, who is one of our team physicians at Orlando Orthopaedic Center, they will not have to return for a second visit as he has computerized access to our Impact scores.***
3. Once the athlete has a return to play form, they will have to follow a graduated return to exercise protocol (light aerobic activity, moderate aerobic activity, sport specific drills, full contact practice) with a minimum of twenty-four hours between each step that must be supervised and approved by the athletic training staff before a physician will give the final clearance to safely return to sport.
4. If the athlete completes the graduated exercise protocol without complications, they can then take the form to their personal physician for a clearance signature, or in the case of Dr. McCleary, the athletic training staff will contact Orlando Orthopaedic for clearance to **RETURN TO PLAY**.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why is it so important that an athlete not return to play until they have completely recovered from a concussion?**

Athletes who are not fully recovered from an initial concussion are significantly vulnerable for recurrent, cumulative, and even catastrophic consequences of a second concussive injury. Such difficulties are prevented if the athlete is allowed time to recover from the concussion and return to play decisions are carefully made. No athlete should return-to-sport or other at-risk participation when symptoms of concussion are present and recovery is ongoing.

### **Is a "CAT scan" or MRI needed to diagnose a concussion?**

Diagnostic testing, which includes CT ("CAT") and MRI scans, are rarely needed following a concussion. While these are helpful in identifying life-threatening brain injuries (e.g. skull fracture, bleeding, swelling), they are not normally utilized, even by athletes who have sustained severe concussions. A concussion is diagnosed based upon the athlete's story of the injury and the health care provider's physical examination.

### **What is the best treatment to help my child recover more quickly from a concussion?**

The best treatment for a concussion is rest. There are no medications that can speed the recovery from a concussion. Exposure to loud noises, bright lights, computers, video games, television and phones (including text messaging) all may worsen the symptoms of a concussion. You should allow your child to rest as much as possible in the days following a concussion. As the symptoms lessen, you can allow increased use of computers, phone, video games, etc., but the access must be lessened if symptoms worsen.

### **How long do the symptoms of a concussion usually last?**

The symptoms of a concussion will usually go away within one week of the initial injury. You should anticipate that your child will likely be out of sports for about two weeks following a concussion. However, in some cases symptoms may last for several weeks, or even months. Symptoms such as headache, memory problems, poor concentration, and mood changes can interfere with school, work, and social interactions. The potential for such long-term symptoms indicates the need for careful management of all concussions.

---

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ONE OF OUR TEAM PHYSICIANS, PLEASE CONTACT THE FOLLOWING:**

**Dr. Michael McCleary  
Orlando Orthopaedic Center  
100 W. Broadway St. Suite 200  
Oviedo, FL  
407-977-3500**

---

**IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS,  
PLEASE CONTACT THE OVIEDO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC TRAINING STAFF  
AT 407-320-4118**