

Concussion Policy



New Zealand Ice Hockey Federation

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New Zealand Ice Hockey Federation
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Concussion Policy

Purpose:

To keep ice hockey players safe and to adopt a policy alongside other full contact New Zealand Sporting Organizations and International Ice Hockey National Associations and Federations.

Policy:

If a player shows any visible signs of a head injury/concussion, they are not to be allowed to continue playing for the remainder of that game. This is to be reported immediately at the time it happens by any NZIHF or Regional Association Official (Referee, Linesmen, and Scorer) who witness the injury.

The player's name and the nature of their injury (dazed, dizziness, vomiting, unbalanced unconscious, etc.) are to be recorded in the game sheet in the "Notes" section at the bottom of the game sheet. The Match Officials must also immediately inform the player's Coach and team Manager of this so that the player can be monitored and kept from taking the ice again.

Any official, coach, manager or parent/guardian can make the call to the game manager or bench manager. They will then liaise with the on-ice officials who will then have the authority to notify the coach/manager of their findings. This process is meant for the safety of the player involved and must be with good intent.

Alternatively if symptoms go un-noticed by a Match Official but are noticed by his/her Coach or Manager, they must report the injury to the scorer to record on the game sheet, to ensure the safety and well-being of their own player. Whilst Officials and Coaches are clearly not trained physicians, they must make a judgment call on any obvious visible symptoms to ensure player safety.

Process:

Before the concussed player can return to playing/practicing they must:

- A. Get clearance from a medical doctor and provide a medical certificate from him/her before they can play or practice again or;

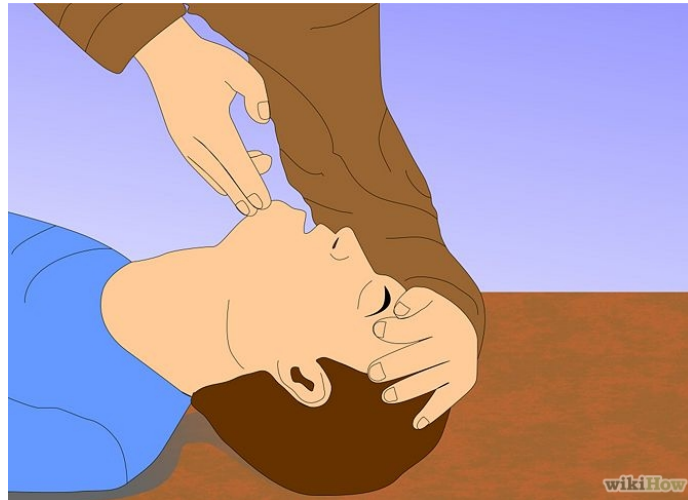
B. Sit a mandatory three-week stand down before playing (or practicing) again, in any NZIHF-sanctioned League or NZIHF competition. If a player's name appears on the game sheet with an incident of concussion, they will then be notified of this by their League Director and/or Regional President. It is the League Director and/or Regional President's responsibility to ensure the concussed player does not play or practice until these conditions are met.

Justification:

This policy works positively in three ways.

- * It stops players and/or team management from ignoring concussions, and not seeking medical attention.
- * It ensures the players spend a satisfactory time away from contact situations and avoid putting themselves at risk of injuring themselves further.
- * It minimizes the chance of players embellishing situations and making more of an incident to draw a more severe penalty on a member of the opposition. If they pretend to be injured and show symptoms of a head injury, they will not be further involved in the game thereby minimizing their own participation.

Determining if someone has concussion



1. Check for consciousness. Although loss of consciousness is an easy indication of a concussion, it is not always requisite. Look to see if the person is responsive and can be roused with conversation. If they are unconscious, check their airways, breathing, and circulation to make sure they are all at normal levels.

2. Analyze their mental state. If the victim is conscious, you can proceed to this analysis immediately. If they are unconscious, then you will have to wait until they regain consciousness. Someone who has suffered a concussion will exhibit:

- A difficult time concentrating
- Foggy thoughts
- Loss of memory
- Difficulty forming new memories
- A feeling of slowness.



3. Determine their mental awareness. If they seem to be acting strangely and are exhibiting the above symptoms of an altered mental state, ask a few questions to determine the extent of their incapacitation. Try asking general questions such as “what is your name?” and “what day is it?” If they are able to respond promptly and correctly to these, try asking a few more difficult memory-based questions.



4. Examine their physical state. Ask them how they feel; sufferers of a concussion often have:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Strong headaches
- Heightened sensitivity to light and sound
- Problems with their balance.



5. Check the victim's eyes. If you have a flashlight, shine the light into their eyes. Do their eyes focus on the light and the pupils react correctly? The pupils of the eyes focused completely on light should constrict (grow smaller). If there is no response or they have irregular eye movements, suspect a head injury, stroke, or serious ailment.

6. Analyze their exhaustion levels. Suffering from a concussion typically disrupts a person's regular sleep schedule and their exhaustion levels. Check to see if the victim is:

- Very tired and requires more sleep than usual
- Has difficulty falling asleep and insomnia
- Sleeps much less than usual
- Highly lethargic or more exhausted during the day than normal

7. Look for changes in their emotional state. Sufferers of a concussion will exhibit:

- Strange changes in their emotional state
- High levels of anger, fear, sadness, or anxiety.
- Mood swings and generally unstable emotions.