

IHSAA Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion

“Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health care professional that day. Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.”

The language above appears in all National Federation sports rule books as part of the suggested guidelines for the management of concussion. It reflects a heightened emphasis on the safety of athletes suspected of having a concussion, especially since the vast majority of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness. The following suggested guidelines provide the technicalities when an athlete in a contest or a practice in an IHSAA recognized sport sustains an apparent concussion.

1. No student athlete should return to play or practice on the same day that the student suffers a confirmed concussion.
2. Any student athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate **health care Professional** that day.
 - (a.) If it is confirmed during a contest or practice by the school’s **health care Professional** that the student did not sustain a concussion or head injury, the **health care Professional** shall issue clearance to return to play. If the event occurred during a contest which continued, the head coach may advise the officials during an appropriate stoppage of play, and the student athlete may reenter competition pursuant to the contest rules.
 - (b.) If the event occurred during a contest, the contest concludes, and the **health care Professional** did NOT clear the student athlete for return to play, the student athlete should be subject to an appropriate return to play protocol which includes clearance to return to play, in writing, by a **health care Provider**, and should not be issued on the same date on which the athlete was removed from play.
3. Any student athlete with a confirmed concussion or head injury should be medically cleared by an appropriate **health care Provider** prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition. After medical clearance by an appropriate **health care Provider**, return to play should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for the delay of the return to play based upon the return of any signs or symptoms.
4. The Official’s Role in Recognizing a Concussive Event:
 - (a.) If, during a contest, an official observes a player and suspects that the player has suffered a head concussion or head injury by exhibiting concussive signs (including appearing dazed, stunned, confused, disoriented, to have memory loss, or the athlete is either unconscious or apparently unconscious), the official should notify a coach that a

player is apparently injured and advise that the player should be examined by an appropriate **health care Professional**.

- (b.) If a concussion event occurred during a contest, and regardless of whether the student athlete returns to play or not, following the contest, an official's report shall be filed with the school of the removed player, including the athletic director, by the Official that initially removed the student athlete from play; this report may be found on the IHSAA website at www.ihsaa.org.

5. Definitions:

- (a.) For purposes of this Concussion Policy, a **health care Provider** is an Indiana licensed health care provider who has been trained in evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries, and includes a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO) who holds an unlimited license to practice medicine in the state of Indiana, but may also include any Indiana health care provider who is licensed by the state of Indiana.
- (b.) For purposes of this Concussion Policy, a **health care Professional** includes any health care Providers, as well as any Indiana certified athletic trainer (ATC/L).
- (c.) In cases where an assigned IHSAA tournament physician (MD/DO) is present, his or her decision regarding any potential concussion, or to forbid an athlete to return to competition, may not be overruled.