

Sports Medicine Monthly

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CONCUSSIONS:

Focusing on the Condition

For the last few years now, the topic of concussions has been ever present across the country. From the inception of the Lystedt Law in Wisconsin to the latest press releases from the



Commissioner for the National Football League, the topic of concussions, concussion management, and the return to play after an athlete sustains a concussion is now rightfully in the forefront of the minds of a majority of coaches, athletic administrators, parents, athletes, and sports medicine professionals.

As a result of the rightful media and public attention, but more so due to the dedicated research and educational efforts of many certified athletic trainers, team physicians, and researchers, we now know more about concussions and appropriate concussion management than we have ever known. Although, from a research and education standpoint, we are truly only beginning to comprehend exactly what happens to a person when they sustain a concussion. This is even more of an ever-present question in the younger athletic population because age and neurological tissue maturity go hand in hand. And, because neurological tissue that is not fully developed is also less resilient to the stress and the shear that occurs when someone sustains a concussion. The younger the population, the greater the predisposition for a concussion, as well as subsequent concussions.

In an effort to reduce not only the likelihood of concussions, but to also provide education and information to those who are most frequently involved with athletics and recreational activity, and to also improve the long-term outcomes of those who sustain concussions, we will utilize the next several newsletters to address this important topic.

Rules, Policies, and Laws:

Oklahoma Statute 24-155 of Title 70

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In May of 2010, then Governor Brad Henry signed Senate Bill 1700 into law. This law, patterned after the state of Washington's Lystedt Law, is still to-date the most inclusive, informative, and restrictive piece of legislation in the state when dealing with the severity and the dangers of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury, or mTBI (i.e. concussions) for schools, parents, coaches, and student athletes who compete in the OSSAA.



Under the provisions of OK Statute 24-155 of Title 70:

"Each school district board of education shall work in cooperation with the OSSAA to develop the guidelines and other pertinent information and forms to inform and educate coaches, youth athletes, and their parents or guardians of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury, including continuing to play after concussion or head injury." Furthermore, "a concussion and head injury information sheet shall be completed...by the youth athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian prior to the youth athlete's participation."

"A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury during a practice or game shall be removed from participation at that time."

Any student-athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury "may not participate until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and receives written clearance to return from that health care provider."



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Rules, Policies, and Laws:

National Federation of State High School Associations



Located in Indianapolis, Indiana, the National Federation of State High School Associations publishes the rules of competition for 16 sports for boys and girls athletic competition while also coordinating fine arts programs such as speech, theater, debate, and music.

Concerning concussions, the NFSHSA has published a set of Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports. These guidelines include:

- “the duration of such symptoms...along with data showing symptoms may worsen some time after the head injury, has shifted focus... This is one reason why these guidelines no longer include an option to return an athlete to play even if clear in 15 minutes”
- “Any athlete who is removed from play because of a concussion should have medical clearance from an appropriate health care professional before being allowed to return to play or practice.”
- ‘mental exertion, as well as physical exertion, should be avoided until symptoms have cleared.”
- “Once the athlete is able to complete a full day of school work, without PE or other exertion, the athlete can begin the gradual return to play protocol”



For more information, visit the National Federation of State High School Associations website at www.nfhs.org.

Rules, Policies, and Laws:

Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association

In support of Oklahoma Statute 24-155 of Title 70, the OSSAA has provided the following recommendations:

- All coaches must view the 20’ educational video produced by the NFSHSA “Concussions in Sports: What you need to know”
- Policies and procedures must be set forth to report and track student-athletes who have sustained a concussion.
- Policies and procedures must be set forth to ensure for a safe return to practice or competition after a concussion.
- Continuing education of all staff is encouraged through publications and research produced by the following organizations:

Oklahoma Athletic Trainers’ Association:
www.oata.net

Centers for Disease Control:
www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury

Sports Concussions:
www.sportsconcussions.org

A Note to the Reader.....

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