



Revised June 2023

ParaSport® Ontario – Concussion Management and Return to Play

Definitions

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

a) “Participant” – Coaches, athletes, volunteers, officials and other Members

Purpose

2. ParaSport Ontario is committed to ensuring the safety of those participating in all the different parasports that are demonstrated or programs completed. ParaSport Ontario recognizes the increased awareness of concussions and their long-term effects and believes that prevention of concussions is paramount to protecting the health and safety of Participants.

3. This Policy provides guidance in identifying common signs and symptoms of concussion, protocol to be followed in the event of a possible concussion, and return to play guidelines should a concussion be diagnosed. Awareness of the signs and symptoms of concussion and knowledge of how to properly manage a concussion is critical to recovery and helping to ensure the individual is not returning to physical activities too soon, risking further complication.

4. A concussion is a clinical diagnosis that can only be made by a physician.

Procedure

5. During all events, competitions, and practices, Participants will use their best efforts to:

a) Be aware of incidents that may cause a concussion, such as:

i. Falls

ii. Accidents

iii. Collisions

iv. Head trauma – (blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head)

b) Recognize and understand the symptoms that may result from a concussion. These may appear immediately after the injury or within hours or days of the injury and may be different for everyone. Some common signs and symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- i. Nausea
- ii. Poor concentration
- iii. Amnesia
- iv. Fatigue
- v. Sensitivity to light or noise
- vi. Irritability
- vii. Poor appetite
- viii. Decreased memory
- ix. Poor balance
- x. Slowed reaction time

c) Identify injured Participants or other individuals who have been involved in any of the above incidents and/or exhibit any of the above symptoms.

Coach / Administrator / Supervisor Responsibilities

6. If a Participant has been identified as having a suspected concussion, the coach, administrator and/or supervisor of that activity will notify all affected parties of the suspected concussion, including the Participant, a parent/guardian (if applicable), and other coaches, administrators and/or supervisors.

7. If the Participant is unconscious – initiate emergency action plan, call 911, and then:

- a) If applicable, contact the Participant's parent/guardian (or emergency contact) to inform them of the injury and that the Participant will be attended to by Emergency Medical Services and possibly transported to a hospital
- b) Stay with the Participant until Emergency Medical Services arrives
- c) Monitor and document any physical, emotional and/or cognitive changes

8. If the Participant is conscious – remove the Participant from the activity immediately and then:

- a) Notify the Participant's parent/guardian (if applicable) or emergency contact

- b) Arrange a ride home for the Participant
- c) Isolate the Participant in a dark room or area if possible
- d) Reduce external stimulus (noise, other people, etc.) if possible
- e) Remain with the Participant until he or she can be taken home
- f) Monitor and document any physical, emotional and/or cognitive changes
- g) Encourage the Participant to consult a physician

Return to Play

9. A Participant with a suspected concussion, even if the Participant was not unconscious, will not be permitted to return to play until the Participant has consulted a physician.

10. The Participant and the Participant's parent/guardian (if applicable) should be directed to the following guidelines established:

- a) If no concussion is diagnosed by a physician: the Participant may return to physical activities
- b) If a concussion is diagnosed by a physician: the Participant should only return to physical activities after following the steps outlined below and/or as directed by a physician:

STEP 1: Complete cognitive and physical rest. Limit school, work, and tasks requiring concentration. Refrain from physical activity until symptoms are gone. Once all symptoms are gone, rest for at least another 24-48 hours and re-consult a physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions.

In order to proceed to Step 2, medical clearance from a physician is required.

STEP 2: Light aerobic exercise to reintroduce physical activity: 10-15 minutes of low intensity activity like walking or stationary cycling.

In order to proceed to Step 3, the Participant or parent/guardian (if applicable) must report back to his/her coach, administrator and/or supervisor that he/she is symptom free.

STEP 3: Sport-specific exercise: 15 minutes of low intensity participation. The environment should be managed so as to ensure the Participant is at minimum risk of falling or colliding with other Participants. The Participant may also attempt basic balance drills.

In order to proceed to Step 4, the Participant or parent/guardian (if applicable) must report back to his/her coach, administrator and/or supervisor that he/she is symptom free.

STEP 4: Activity with no body contact: non-contact practice and non-contact sport specific drills – no activity that involves head impact or other jarring motions.

In order to proceed to Step 5, medical clearance from a physician, indicating that the Participant is symptom free and able to return to full participation in physical activity, is required

STEP 5: Full participation in non-contact sports. Full training/practice for contact sports. No competition that involves body contact.

In order to proceed to Step 6, the Participant or parent/guardian (if applicable) must report back to his/her coach, administrator and/or supervisor that he/she is symptom free.

STEP 6: Full participation in contact sports.

c) Each step must take a minimum of 24 hours and the length of time needed to complete each step will vary based on the severity of the concussion.

d) The Participant should be monitored regularly for the return of any signs and/or symptoms of concussion. If signs and/or symptoms return, the Participant must consult with a physician

Medical Clearance

11. This Policy requires the Participant to consult with a physician throughout the return to play process and provide proof of medical clearance before being eligible for progression to Step 2 and to Step 5. ParaSport Ontario will comply with all directions provided by the physician that may supersede this Policy.

12. If a Participant is showing signs of concussion and/or has been clinically diagnosed as concussed, the coach, administrator and/or supervisor of that Participant will prevent the Participant from participating until the required medical clearance has been provided.

13. Once the Participant has provided medical clearance, the coach, administrator and/or supervisor will be required to forward a copy of the medical clearance letter to ParaSport Ontario for retention.

Non-Compliance

14. Failure to abide by any of the guidelines and/or protocols contained within this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with ParaSport Ontario's Discipline and Complaints Policy.

For more information: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/rowans-law-concussion-safety>