
CONNECTICUT VALLEY YOUTH LACROSSE, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Connecticut Valley Youth Lacrosse, Inc. Program Members

FROM: Board of Directors

DATE: December 7, 2010

RE: Rules of Play for the 2011 Season

This memorandum sets forth the Rules of Play for the 2011 Connecticut Valley Youth Lacrosse league season adopted by the Board of Directors on December 7, 2010.

A. Federation Rules: All games shall be governed by the 2011 National Federation of State High School Associations Boys Lacrosse Rules (the "Federation Rules"), except as modified by these rules of play. This memorandum sets forth the modifications to the Federation Rules that will be applicable to Connecticut Valley Youth Lacrosse League play.

B. Modifications to Federation Rules. The 2011 Federation Rules shall be modified for Connecticut Valley Youth Lacrosse League play as follows:

1. Pregame Conference: The home team coach shall be required to confer with the visiting team coach and the officials prior to the start of each Senior Game and each Junior Game for the purpose of confirming mutual agreement by all parties as to the modifications to the Federation Rules that will be in effect for the Connecticut Valley Youth Lacrosse League Play. The purpose of this pregame conference shall be to insure that all parties are in agreement regarding the modifications to the Federation Rules that are applicable to Senior Games and Junior Games. All coaches are strongly encouraged to have with them at each game the Connecticut Valley Youth Lacrosse League Summary of Significant Modifications to the Federation Rules.

2. Responsibilities of the Home Team:

- (a) In the event that the uniform jerseys of two teams are too close in color, the home team shall supply and wear contrasting color jerseys. These may be unnumbered mesh practice jerseys. Every effort shall be made for game jerseys to have numbers on the front and back.
- (b) The home team shall supply all equipment for the officials (i.e. horn, clock/stop watches, balls, etc.). No official scorebook shall be required.

- (c) The home team shall have the responsibility of providing officials at each game. Two certified youth lacrosse officials shall officiate Bantam and Junior games wherever possible. A single certified youth lacrosse official may officiate Bantam games. A single certified high school official may officiate Bantam or Junior games. Wherever possible, two certified high school officials or one certified high school official and one certified youth official shall officiate Senior games. In the event that the home team is unable to satisfy the requirements of this rule with respect to the provision of officials, the head coaches of the teams scheduled to play may agree on the use of non-certified officials, and in that event each team shall select one official. If a game commences using officials that do not meet the requirements of this rule, the visiting team coach may at any time during the first 3 periods of the game elect to terminate the game based upon legitimate concerns with respect to the quality of the officiating. If that occurs, the game shall be rescheduled. In the event that both teams elect to play without officials that satisfy the requirements of this rule, the game shall be a binding league game. Failure to provide officials that meet the requirements of this rule shall not be grounds for a forfeit, and every effort shall be made to reschedule the game.

3. Spectators. All spectators shall be on the side of the field opposite the bench area.

4. Equipment. All players shall wear NOCSAE approved helmets and face masks. Players on the same team shall not be required to wear helmets that are all the same color. Mouth guards are mandatory, but no specific color is required. Color requirements for gloves, under jerseys, compression shorts and sweat pants will not be enforced. Under no circumstances shall hockey helmets be permitted to be worn by any player at the Bantam, Junior or Senior levels.

5. Time:

(a) The regulation playing time (stop time) of a Senior game shall be 40 minutes, divided into 4 periods of 10 minutes each.

(b) The regulation playing time (stop time) of a Junior game shall be 40 minutes, divided into 4 periods of 10 minutes each.

(c) The regulation playing time of a Bantam game shall be 60 minutes divided into four periods of 15 minutes each. Each period shall be running time with the exception of the fourth period, during which stop time shall be utilized in the last two minutes. In addition, the clock shall be stopped for all team timeouts and all injury timeouts.

6. Coaches and Table Personnel. Each team shall be permitted to have a maximum of three (3) coaches located within the Coaches Area or the Team Area at any time

during the course of a game. The table area personnel shall not constitute coaches and shall not be counted for purposes of the three (3) coach limit set forth herein. Table personnel shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) individuals. The table personnel shall be instructed prior to the start of each game that they are not permitted to coach from the table area and they are not permitted to advocate for either team during the course of a game, but instead must maintain a neutral demeanor at all times during the course of a game.

7. Overtime. In the event that the score is tied at the end of a game, the teams shall play 2 sudden victory overtimes of 3 minutes each. If the game is still tied at the end of the second overtime, the game shall be considered a tie. This rule shall not be applicable to league playoff games, and all league playoff games shall continue with successive overtime periods of 3 minutes each until one team scores a goal and achieves sudden victory.

8. Substitutions. Regular substitutions (with a horn) may be made when play has been suspended for any reason, including the ball going out of bounds along either end line. This modification of the Federation Rules shall not be applicable to Senior A play, and all substitutions at the Senior A level of play shall conform with the Federation Rules.

9. Timeouts. Each team shall be entitled to 4 full time outs during each game, limited to 2 time outs each half.

10. Illegal Bodycheck; Slashing. An illegal bodycheck shall be called at the Junior level of play when a player takes more than 4 steps before making physical contact with a player on the opposing team. Illegal bodychecks shall be called in accordance with the Federation Rules at the Senior level of play. Officials shall strictly enforce the slashing rule at all levels of play.

11. Stick Checks. The officials shall not conduct random stick checks during the first half and the second half of each game. Coaches shall only be entitled to request stick checks during Senior and Junior games. If a stick check is requested and the stick is legal, the team requesting the stick check shall be charged with a timeout. An illegal stick shall result in a 1 minute non-releasable penalty. A goal scored by an illegal stick shall be disallowed. An illegal stick shall be removed from play for the remainder of the game unless the only violation is an illegal pocket, in which case the pocket may be corrected and the stick may be returned to the game. No stick checks shall be permitted at the Bantam level of play. Officials at the Bantam level of play shall, however, be encouraged to request that a player tighten the player's pocket when the official observes a pocket that the official believes is deeper than permitted by the Federation Rules. No penalties shall be assessed under such circumstances.

12. Stalling. Neither offensive stalling rules nor defensive stalling rules shall be enforced at the Bantam or Junior levels of play, including without limitation offensive stalling during the final 2 minutes of regulation play. The only stalling rule that shall be applicable to the Senior level of play shall be the offensive stalling rule during the final 2 minutes of regulation play.

13. Ten Second Count and Twenty Second Count. The 10 second count applicable to offensive play shall not be applicable at the Bantam, Junior or Senior B levels of

play. The 10 second count applicable to offensive play shall be applicable to the Senior A level of play. The 20 second count that requires that a team advance the ball beyond the midfield line after gaining possession inside the defensive half of the field shall not be applicable at the Bantam, Junior or Senior B levels of play, but shall be applicable to the Senior A level of Play.

14. Penalties on Goalies. In the event that a time serving penalty is called on a goalie, the in home rather than the goalie shall serve the penalty time. If a third time serving penalty is called on the same goalie, however, the goalie shall be required to serve the penalty time for such third penalty and each time serving penalty thereafter.

15. Six Goal Rule. In the event that a team is leading by 6 goals, there shall be no face-off after each goal scored by either team while one team leads by 6 goals or more and possession of the ball shall be awarded to the losing team after each goal. Face-offs shall resume if the lead is reduced to fewer than 6 goals. The losing team shall be entitled to waive this rule and participate in a face-off. This 6 goal rule modifies the 12 goal rule that is part of the Federation Rules. The Six Goal Rule shall not be applicable to Connecticut Valley Youth Lacrosse League semi-final and final tournament games.

16. Interruption of Game. If a game is interrupted pursuant to Rule 3-5 because of events beyond the control of the responsible authorities (such as lightning), the game shall be continued from the point at which it was suspended if three (3) periods have not been completed when the game is suspended. If three (3) or more periods have been completed, the game is final as of the suspension of the game. The officials shall be instructed to wait a minimum of twenty (20) minutes following the suspension of any game in order to determine whether the game can be continued even if more than three (3) quarters of the game has been completed as of the time of suspension. This rule shall not be applicable to league playoff games. Any league playoff game that is suspended shall be completed as soon as practicable, notwithstanding the fact that 3 or more periods have been completed.

17. Leaving the Field. If a CVYLL team leaves the field during the course of play and refuses to return to the field, regardless of the circumstances, the game shall be declared a forfeit and the team that did not leave the field shall be the winning team.

18. Fouling Out. Any individual that accumulates four (4) personal fouls during a single game, regardless of the penalty time assessed with respect to such personal fouls, shall be prohibited from participating further in such game following the fourth personal foul.

19. Fighting. Fighting is an expulsion foul. Any player that is expelled from a game for fighting shall be prohibited from participating in the next game. Any player who is expelled for fighting a second time during a single season shall be prohibited from any further participation for the remainder of the season.

20. Request for Review and Clarification. Rule 7-13 of the Federation Rules, which permits a coach to request that an official review and clarify a rule when a coach believes that it has been misapplied, shall not be applicable to Connecticut Valley Youth Lacrosse League play.

21. Required Number of Players; Goalie Required. A team must have at least 8 players, including a fully equipped goalie, in order to begin a game. If a team does not have at least 8 players, including a fully equipped goalie, at the designated time for the start of a game the officials shall delay the starting time of the game by at least 15 minutes in order to provide an opportunity for additional players to arrive at the game site. If a team does not have at least 8 players, including a fully equipped goalie, at the end of this 15 minute period, the team with fewer than 8 players, including a fully equipped goalie, shall forfeit the game. If both teams have fewer than 8 players, including a fully equipped goalie, the game shall be rescheduled.

22. Margin of Victory Shall Not Exceed 10 Goals. Each team shall use its best efforts to insure that the margin of victory in any particular game does not exceed ten (10) goals. Any game in which the margin of victory exceeds ten (10) goals may be reported to the Chair of the Sportsmanship Committee by the losing team promptly following the conclusion of any such game. In the event of any such report, the Chair of the Sportsmanship Committee shall conduct an investigation and determine the reason or reasons for a margin of victory in excess of ten (10) goals. If the Chair of the Sportsmanship Committee determines that the winning team failed to use its best efforts to limit the margin of victory to ten (10) goals or less, the Program that sponsors the winning team shall be publicly sanctioned for poor sportsmanship the first time this occurs. Any subsequent violations may result in the suspension of the offending team's Head Coach from further participation in league play for up to the remainder of the season, as determined by the CVYL Board of Directors. The Chair of the Sportsmanship Committee shall also have the authority to investigate the facts and circumstances that resulted in a margin of victory in excess of ten (10) goals notwithstanding the failure of the losing team to report any such excessive margin of victory to the Chair of the Sportsmanship Committee.

23. Running Time. After the first half, any time the score differential reaches nine (9) goals or more, the clock will only be stopped for a team timeout, an official's timeout or an injury timeout. Should the score differential be reduced to less than nine (9) goals, then normal play will resume. All penalties that occur during a score differential situation of nine (9) goals or more will be running time. In this situation the running time penalty begins with the next whistle resuming play.

24. 2011 Federation Rule Changes. The major 2011 Federation Rule Changes are attached to these Rules of Play. All of the major 2011 Federation Rule Changes shall be applicable to CVYL League Play, subject to all modifications already made with respect to the Federation Rules, including rules relating to stalling and the required number of players required to start a game.

25. Concussions. As a special point of emphasis, the 2011 Federation Rule Changes highlight the rules applicable to a player exhibiting the symptoms of a concussion. Specifically, any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional. Attached to these Rules of Play are the Federation Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports. All programs are urged to develop and adopt a concussion management policy that shall be applicable to all levels of youth lacrosse play.

C. Special Rules Applicable to Bantam Play. The Federation Rules shall be further modified in connection with all Bantam games in accordance with the following:

1. Pre-Game Conference. The home team coach shall be required to confer with the visiting team coach and the officials prior to the start of each Bantam game for the purpose of confirming mutual agreement by all parties as to the special rules applicable to Bantam play, including without limitation special rules applicable to body checking, penalties and the three pass rule. The purpose of this pre-game conference shall be to insure that all parties are in agreement regarding the special rules applicable to Bantam play prior to the start of each game. Each Bantam Coach is strongly encouraged to bring the Connecticut Valley Youth Lacrosse League Points of Emphasis for Bantam Play to each Bantam Game.

2. Field Size. The home team shall use its best efforts to provide a modified field smaller in size than a regulation field, ranging from 60 yards by 40 yards up to 90 yards by 50 yards (the "Modified Field"). Each Modified Field shall include field markings that denote the defensive and attack areas in proportion to the size of the Modified Field, together with the wing areas. CVYL strongly recommends that Bantam games shall be played on a Modified Field wherever practicable.

3. Goal Line. When the Modified Field is used and the field is 60-70 yards long, goal lines shall be 50 yards apart. For fields 80-90 yards long, goal lines shall be 60 yards apart.

4. Midfield Lines. When the Modified Field is used, midfield lines shall be established at the point that is half the overall length of the field.

5. Players. When the Modified Field is used, on fields 60-70 yards in length the team shall play 7 v 7 (2 midfielders, 2 attack, 2 defensemen and 1 goal keeper). On fields 80-90 yards in length, teams shall play 8 v 8 using an additional midfielder.

6. Off Sides. When the Modified Field is used, a minimum of 2 players shall always remain in the teams offensive half of the field and a minimum of 3 players shall always remain in the defensive half of the field.

7. Sticks. Minimum length of 36 inches, maximum length of 42 inches. No long crosses shall be permitted to be used in Bantam play. The head of all crosses used in Bantam play shall conform with Federation Rules. No restrictions shall be applicable to the goalie's crosse.

8. Checks. No bodychecking is allowed in Bantam play. It is expected that some unintentional contact will occur in loose ball situations, but excessive contact and all intentional body checking shall be avoided and an illegal bodycheck penalty shall be called for excessive contact or intentional bodychecks. For example, no man/ball involving an intentional bodycheck shall be permitted in Bantam play.

9. Penalties. No time shall be served for technical fouls, with possession awarded to the team that is fouled. Penalty time shall be served for personal fouls, with the player who committed the foul required to serve penalty time, but teams shall play at full strength and the player serving the penalty time may be substituted for. The offended team shall be given a fast break opportunity as a consequence of each personal foul. For purposes of this fast break opportunity, whenever practicable the playing field shall be marked with the starting point for the fast break opportunity, which shall be five (5) yards from the X on the center line on either side of the center line (the "Fast Break Starting Point"). A player from the offended team shall be given the ball at the Fast Break Starting Point. All attack and defensive players shall stay in the goal area, and all midfielders shall be on the center line. All players shall be entitled to move when the whistle sounds beginning play. The player who was fouled is not required to start with the ball in connection with the fast break opportunity.

10. Goalie Four Second Count. When the goalie gains possession of the ball in the crease, the official shall commence a visual four (4) second count. At the end of the visual four (4) second count the official shall continue with a verbal and visual count for an additional four (4) seconds. The failure of the goalie to surrender possession of the ball by the end of this eight (8) second count shall result in a loss of possession and the other team shall be awarded possession of the ball outside of the goal area.

11. Three Pass Rule.

- (a) Three Passes. Once a team gains possession of the ball, three passes must occur before a team can take a shot.
- (b) Definition of a "Pass":
 - (i) A "Pass" is defined as a throw traveling more than approximately three feet that is intended to reach a teammate;
 - (ii) A pass does not require a catch;
 - (iii) A pass that does not include a catch shall only be deemed a pass if and when the team that initiates the pass gains possession of the ball with no intervening possession by the opposing team; and
 - (iv) A goalie clear from inside or outside the crease is considered a pass.
- (c) Officials. Officials shall count OUT LOUD each pass to help themselves, players and coaches keep track of the pass count.
- (d) Location of Passes. Passes may occur anywhere on the field, in either the offensive or defensive end. The intent of this rule is to promote the use of passing to move the ball up the field.
- (e) Consequence of Three Passes.

- (i) Once three passes have occurred, the attacking team may take a shot.
- (ii) If the attacking team loses possession of the ball after three passes have occurred (A) as a result of a shot that does not result in a goalie save and possession of the ball by the goalie or (B) a turnover in the offensive end of the field and the attacking team regains possession before the ball crosses the midfield line, the attacking team can shoot without being required to make three passes again.
- (iii) If the attacking team loses possession of the ball after three passes have occurred as a result of a shot and a goalie save where the goalie retains possession of the ball, and if the attacking team regains possession of the ball in the offensive end of the the field immediately following the goalie save before any other member of the clearing team gains possession, three (3) passes must occur before a shot can be taken.
- (iv) Once the ball moves from the defensive end of the field into the offensive end, a change of possession from the attacking team to the defensive team requires the defensive team on attack to make three passes before a shot can be taken.
- (f) Violation of Three Pass Rule. Any violation of the three pass rule (shooting before three passes have been made) will result in the award of possession to the defending team, with the ball awarded outside of the goal area laterally from where the shot in violation of the three pass rule was taken.
- (g) Exception for Fast Breaks Attributable to Personal Fouls. The Three Pass Rule shall not be applicable to a fast break opportunity awarded to the offended team as a consequence of a personal foul. In connection with each fast break opportunity awarded to the offended team, however, the officials shall place special emphasis on the prohibition against body checking in Bantam play and any intentional contact made by the player with possession of the ball in connection with a fast break opportunity in relation to an opposing player shall constitute an illegal body check and shall be penalized.

12. Five Goal Rule. Possession following a goal scored by either team will be awarded to a team that is trailing by five or more goals, with no face-off.

2011 Major Rules Changes for Boys Lacrosse

- 1-2-1 A bold white line shall be marked through the center of the field perpendicular to the sidelines. This line shall be known as the center line.

Note: If the field of play has a logo in the center or at any other part of the field of play, that logo should not obstruct the visibility of the required marks. A solid or shadow-bordered line is permissible. A shadow line is a line that designates the continuation of the required line by use of a border or outline lines, at least ¼ inch wide.

Rationale: Officials need to be able to easily determine exactly where the center line is, even if the field has a large logo. Thus, at a minimum, there must a shadow line through the logo, if one exists.

- 1-9-1-g-7 Add the following as number 7 and renumber existing number 7 as number 8:

7. Contrasting colored piping not to exceed 1/8 inch wide is allowed.

Rationale: The original problem that necessitated the uniform rule change in 2008 was the contrasting color of the yoke. Contrasting colored piping does not cause a problem for officials.

- 4-28-7 Any suspension of play...~~An apparently unconscious player is determined by the game officials. The player may not return to play in the game without written authorization from a physician (M.D./D.O.).~~ Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. (See NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion)
This time-out is an official's time-out.....

Rationale: Clarification from NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.

- 5-3-4, 5, 6 ART. 4 Blocking of an opponent with the head or initiating contact with the head against an opponent, initiating contact directly to an opponent's head or initiating contact to an opponent's body that then follows through to the head. A one- to three-minute non-releasable penalty will be assessed.

ART. 5 Body-checking of an opponent who has any part of his body other than the feet on the ground.

ART. 6 If a player who is about to be body-checked turns his back, jumps or moves in such a manner to make what started out to be a legal check appear illegal, no foul is committed by the player applying the body check.

2011 Major Rules Changes for Boys Lacrosse

Rationale: Given recent information regarding the significant consequences of concussion, the rules should reflect the goal to remove all contact with and to the head from the game.

Major Editorial Changes

- 1-9-1-g-2 Side inserts may be of contrasting color(s) but no more than 3 inches wide and extending vertically no more than armpit to waistband.

Rationale: The previous wording of the rule simply specified that the side trim extended from armpit to waistband. Some were interpreting this to mean that the trim must extend the full length allowed, from armpit to waistband. This revision should make it clear that the trim could be less than armpit to waistband.

- 1-10-1b ~~Items that, in the opinion of the officials, endanger that individual or other players. Any hard substance in its final form (including but not limited to leather, rubber, plastic, plaster or fiberglass) worn on the hand, wrist, forearm or elbow, is prohibited unless it is necessary to protect an injury. If worn, it shall be directed in writing by a licensed medical physician (M.D./D.O.) and it shall be covered on all exposed surfaces with no less than ½ inch thick, high density, closed-cell polyurethane or an alternate material of the same minimum thickness and with similar physical properties. Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, splints, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow or upper arm is prohibited unless it is necessary to protect an injury. If worn, it must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½ inch thick. Knee and ankle braces which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding.~~

Rationale: Clarification from NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.

- 1-11-1 The pregame equipment certification by the head coach shall act as the team warning. The head coach shall certify to the referee before the game that all players are legally equipped by rule.

Add the following note:

Note: "a" through "e" can be covered by the referee asking the head coach: "Coach, are all your players legally equipped by rule?"

Rationale: The present coaches certification is a mouthful...long and hard to remember and hard to recite exactly. Leave a,b,c,d,e but add note just after e:

- 2-7-2f Too many or too few players on the field.

Rationale: Clarifies that the CBO is not limited to just calling too many players on the field. Makes it consistent with page 42 4-22-Situation B

2011 Major Rules Changes for Boys Lacrosse

- 4-3-5 The official will sound the whistle promptly after readying the ball for play and stating the word “set.” For hearing-impaired players a reasonable accommodation for the ‘set’ command and whistle sound will be provided...

Rationale: Players unable to hear the “set” command and/or the whistle sound are at a decided disadvantage on the face off.

- 4-21-2 Make the first paragraph article 1 and add the following as paragraph article 2:

b. If the goalkeeper loses his stick with the ball in it within his goal crease, the whistle shall be blown and the ball shall be awarded to the defensive team laterally outside the goal area.

Rationale: Risk minimization.

- 5-6-3 Striking an opponent ~~in any part of the face, neck, chest, back, shoulders, groin, or on the head~~ on any part of the body with the crosse (including its cap end)....

Rationale: In the present long list of body parts not to be slashed there is no mention of leg, arm or foot. “Any part of the body” is a simpler, shorter, cleaner way of stating this while also adding what is missing. A player’s gloved hand is already covered in the last sentence of the article.

- 6-5-2-b3 Intentionally kick an opponent’s crosse.

Rationale: The rules did not previously include a statement which specifically prohibited a player from intentionally kicking an opponent’s crosse although in most situations it was considered illegal to do so. The addition of this statement makes it clear that it is a violation.

Comments on Rules Revisions

- 1-2-1 In order to effectively and accurately determine offsides as well as the positioning of the ball for faceoffs at the Center faceoff X, officials, coaches and players need to know the exact location of the centerline.
- 1-9-1 Contrasting piping a maximum of 1/8" will be allowed.
- 4-28-7 Further clarifies signs and symptoms of a concussion and procedures to be followed for a player exhibiting such behavior. It additionally the rule provider direction for return to play.
- 5-3-4 **Illegal Body Check:** This revision specifies that a player who checks an opponent with his head or body checks an opponent to the head area or whose body check rides up to the head area is to be assessed a one to three minute non-releasable personal foul. Blows to the head are a major player safety concern. Officials are urged to make this call for checks with or to the head area and coaches are reminded to teach players that such checks are illegal and should not be part of the game.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

Concussions can appear in many different ways. Listed below are some of the signs and symptoms frequently associated with concussions. Most signs, symptoms and abnormalities after a concussion fall into the four categories listed below. A coach, parent or other person who knows the athlete well can often detect these problems by observing the athlete and/or by asking a few relevant questions of the athlete, official or a teammate who was on the field or court at the time of the concussion. Below are some suggested observations and questions a non-medical individual can use to help determine whether an athlete has suffered a concussion and how urgently he or she should be sent for appropriate medical care.

1. PROBLEMS IN BRAIN FUNCTION:

- Confused state – dazed look, vacant stare or confusion about what happened or is happening.
- Memory problems – can't remember assignment on play, opponent, score of game, or period of the game; can't remember how or with whom he or she traveled to the game, what he or she was wearing, what was eaten for breakfast, etc.
- Symptoms reported by athlete – Headache, nausea or vomiting; blurred or double vision; oversensitivity to sound, light or touch; ringing in ears; feeling foggy or groggy; dizziness.
- Lack of sustained attention – difficulty sustaining focus adequately to complete a task, a coherent thought or a conversation.

2. SPEED OF BRAIN FUNCTION: Slow response to questions, slow slurred speech, incoherent speech, slow body movements and slow reaction time.

3. UNUSUAL BEHAVIORS: Behaving in a combative, aggressive or very silly manner; atypical behavior for the individual; repeatedly asking the same question over and over; restless and irritable behavior with constant motion and attempts to return to play; reactions that seem out of proportion and inappropriate; and having trouble resting or "finding a comfortable position."

4. PROBLEMS WITH BALANCE AND COORDINATION: Dizziness, slow clumsy movements, inability to walk a straight line or balance on one foot with eyes closed.

IF NO MEDICAL PERSONNEL ARE ON HAND AND AN INJURED ATHLETE HAS ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS, HE OR SHE SHOULD BE SENT FOR APPROPRIATE MEDICAL CARE.

CHECKING FOR CONCUSSION

The presence of any of the signs or symptoms that are listed in this brochure suggest a concussion has most likely occurred. In addition to observation and direct questioning for symptoms, medical professionals have a number of other instruments to evaluate attention, processing speed, memory, balance, reaction time, and ability to think and analyze information (called executive brain function). These are the brain functions that are most likely to be adversely affected by a concussion and most likely to persist during the post concussion period.

If an athlete seems "clear" he or she should be exercised enough to increase the heart rate and then evaluate if any symptoms return before allowing that athlete to practice or play.

Computerized tests that can evaluate brain function are now being used by some medical professionals at all levels of sports from youth to professional and elite teams. They provide an additional tool to assist physicians in determining when a concussed athlete appears to have healed enough to return to school and play. This is especially helpful when dealing with those athletes denying symptoms in order to play sooner.

For non-medical personnel, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has also developed a tool kit ("Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports"), which has been made available to all high schools, and has information for coaches, athletes and parents. The NFHS is proud to be a co-sponsor of this initiative.

PREVENTION

Although all concussions cannot be prevented, many can be minimized or avoided. Proper coaching techniques, good officiating of the existing rules, and use of properly fitted equipment can minimize the risk of head injury. Although the NFHS advocates the use of mouthguards in nearly all sports and mandates them in some, there is no convincing scientific data that their use will prevent concussions.

Prepared by NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, 2009

References:

NFHS Concussions, 2008 NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook (Third Edition), 2008: 77-82.
NFHS, <http://www.nfhs.org>.

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National Federation of State
High School Associations



**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES
FOR MANAGEMENT OF
CONCUSSION IN SPORTS**

**EVEN SEEMINGLY MINOR CONCUSSIONS
CAN HAVE DEVASTATING RESULTS**

INTRODUCTION

Concussions are a common problem in sports and have the potential for serious complications if not managed correctly. Even what appears to be a "minor ding or bell ringer" has the real risk of catastrophic results when an athlete is returned to action too soon. The medical literature and lay press are reporting instances of death from "second impact syndrome" when a second concussion occurs before the brain has recovered from the first one regardless of how mild both injuries may seem.

At many athletic contests across the country, trained and knowledgeable individuals are not available to make the decision to return concussed athletes to play. Frequently, there is undue pressure from various sources (parents, player and coach) to return a valuable athlete to action. In addition, often there is unwillingness by the athlete to report headaches and other findings because the individual knows it would prevent his or her return to play.

Outlined below are some guidelines that may be helpful for parents, coaches and others dealing with possible concussions. Please bear in mind that these are general guidelines and must not be used in place of the central role that physicians and athletic trainers must play in protecting the health and safety of student-athletes.

SIDELINE MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION

1. Did a concussion take place? Based on mechanism of injury, observation, history and unusual behavior and reactions of the athlete, even without loss of consciousness, assume a concussion has occurred if the head was hit and even the mildest of symptoms occur. (See other side for signs and symptoms)

2. Does the athlete need immediate referral for emergency care? If confusion, unusual behavior or responsiveness, deteriorating condition, loss of consciousness, or concern about neck and spine injury exist, the athlete should be referred at once for emergency care.

3. If no emergency is apparent, how should the athlete be monitored? Every 5-10 minutes, mental status, attention, balance, behavior, speech and memory should be examined until stable over a few hours. If appropriate medical care is not available, an athlete even with mild symptoms should be sent for medical evaluation.

4. No athlete suspected of having a concussion should return to the same practice or contest, even if symptoms clear in 15 minutes.

MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSIONS AND RETURN TO PLAY

(See "SIDELINE DECISION-MAKING" Below)

Increasing evidence is suggesting that initial signs and symptoms, including loss of consciousness and amnesia, may not be very predictive of the true severity of the injury and the prognosis or outcome. More importance is being assigned to the duration of such symptoms and this, along with data showing symptoms may worsen some time after the head injury, has shifted focus to continued monitoring of the athlete. This is one reason why these guidelines no longer include an option to return an athlete to play even if clear in 15 minutes and why there is no discussion about the "Grade" of the concussion.

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. The Second International Conference on Concussion held in Prague recommends an athlete should not return to practice or competition in sport until he or she is asymptomatic including after exercise.

Recent information suggests that mental exertion, as well as physical exertion, should be avoided until concussion symptoms have cleared. Premature mental or physical exertion may lead to more severe and more prolonged post concussion period. Therefore, the athlete should not study, play video games, do computer work or phone texting until his or her symptoms are resolving. Once symptoms are clear, the student-athlete should try reading for short peri-

ods of time. When 1-2 hours of studying can be done without symptoms developing, the athlete may return to school for short periods gradually increasing until a full day of school is tolerated without return of symptoms.

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 as outlined below. Each step increases the intensity and duration of the physical exertion until all skills required by the specific sport can be accomplished without symptoms. These recommendations have been based on the awareness of the increased vulnerability of the brain to concussions occurring close together and of the cumulative effects of multiple concussions on long-term brain function. Research is now revealing some fairly objective and relatively easy-to-use tests which appear to identify subtle residual deficits that may not be obvious from the traditional evaluation. These identifiable abnormalities frequently persist after the obvious signs of concussion are gone and appear to have relevance to whether an athlete can return to play in relative safety. The significance of these deficits is still under study and the evaluation instruments represent a work in progress. They may be helpful to the professional determining return to play in conjunction with consideration of the severity and nature of the injury; the interval since the last head injury; the duration of symptoms before clearing; and the level of play.

SIDELINE DECISION-MAKING

1. No athlete should return to play (RTP) on the same day of concussion.
2. Any athlete removed from play because of a concussion must have medical clearance from an appropriate health care professional before he or she can resume practice or competition.
3. Close observation of athlete should continue for a few hours.
4. After medical clearance, RTP should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP based on return of any signs or symptoms.

A. ATHLETE MUST REMAIN ASYMPTOMATIC TO PROGRESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

B. IF SYMPTOMS RECUR, ATHLETE MUST RETURN TO PREVIOUS LEVEL.

C. MEDICAL CHECK SHOULD OCCUR BEFORE CONTACT.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE RTP PROTOCOL

1. No exertional activity until asymptomatic.
2. When the athlete appears clear, begin low-impact activity such as walking, stationary bike, etc.
3. Initiate aerobic activity fundamental to specific sport such as skating or running, and may also begin progressive strength training activities.
4. Begin non-contact skill drills specific to sport such as dribbling, fielding, batting, etc.
5. Full contact in practice setting.
6. If athlete remains asymptomatic, he or she may return to game/play.