

Natick Comets Concussion Information

Updated 03/2016

Purpose:

These guidelines are intended to minimize the effects of sports concussion injuries for Natick Comets Youth Hockey players. The Comets use a comprehensive approach to protecting players. This approach involves education of athletes, coaches, parents, as well as the supervision and management of an injured student during a concussion recovery period. Whenever possible, we coordinate with school personnel as well.

In addition to medical management by physicians, our program includes baseline neuropsychological testing of players before any injury has occurred, and then follow-up neuropsychological testing of injured athletes to gauge the progress of recovery. Although every concussion is different, standardized guidelines for monitoring and management of concussed athletes helps us monitor recovery, reduce complications, and reduce the risk of repeat brain injury of concussed athletes.

Note: In this document the following abbreviations will appear:

- CN refers to the **Consulting Neuropsychologist**. The CN may be used from time to time for consultation, information or advice by the LAT, safety director or member of the Comets BOD regarding individual concussion cases.
- LAT refers to the Natick Comets Licensed Athletic Trainer
- DOS refers to the Natick Comets Director of Safety
- BOD refers to the Natick Comets Board of Directors

Guidelines for Coaches and Parents:

1. All Comets Coaches must complete the on line instructional course offered by the CDC (Center for Disease Control) entitled "Heads Up - Concussion in Youth Sports" or The National Federation of State High School Associations, "concussion in Sports v-2.0". Each member of the Natick Comets coaching staff must provide a confirmation receipt received after passing either of these courses to the Natick Comets Registrar.
2. Hockey Players have been identified as having a significant level of risk for head trauma and both the Natick High School Athletic Department and the Comets community have taken steps to increase safety for all players. Working with the NHS Athletic Director beginning in 2015-16 all students in grades 8, 10 and 12 will take a baseline computerized neuropsychological test (called an "ImPACT" test) during school hours administered by trained staff at the middle and high schools. In 2016-17 the same even numbered grades will take an ImPACT baseline test. At that point all students in the Natick School system from grade 8 through 12 will have a valid baseline test. Any Comets player **10 years and older**-including-the skills or house league programs not in the Natick School system wishing to have a baseline test can contact the Director of Player Safety and be advised on how to schedule a test.
3. We strongly recommend that any participant who suffers a head injury with **loss of consciousness should be evacuated using EMS for immediate evaluation at a local Hospital Emergency Department**. Suspected concussion injuries may also be evacuated dependent

upon sideline evaluation by the player's coach. Any player suspected of sustaining a head injury will be removed from the practice, game or activity for the remainder of the day.

4. Any athlete suspected of having concussion symptoms, either through sideline assessment, by later report from an athlete, coach, or parent will be removed from the ice or activity by a coach or assistant coach. The injured player will remain with the coach or assistant coach until the player's parent or a guardian can take over watching the player. If the player is not with his/her parent the guardian must be instructed not to leave the player alone. An injured player will not be allowed to leave a venue without a responsible adult to supervise him/her. The player's parent or guardian should be contacted as soon as possible after an injury has occurred.
5. **The Head coach will notify the parents of the injured athlete and the DOS. The DOS will recommend to the parents of the athlete that they contact the school administration about the head injury.** The injured athlete will take a post injury ImpACT test administered by the Natick Comets LAT, John Inacio, **after being medically cleared by their doctor.** Any information relating to a possible head injury (resulting in a concussion or not) **must** be passed on to the Natick Comets DOS **by email** for follow up on the injury. At the current time the DOS is: Chris Collins, snake1267@yahoo.com.
6. The injured athlete will usually be advised by their physician to avoid physical exertion and cognitive activity. Accordingly, the injured athlete will not be allowed to participate in any Natick Comets team sports activities involving exertion (other than flexibility) or physical contact while any concussion symptoms persist. The Comets require a **7 day symptom free period** before the athlete can begin any return to play steps under the supervision of a coach, LAT or other party designated by the DOS.
7. The head coach or an assistant coach shall fill out the injury report supplied by USA Hockey and be sure the paperwork gets to the DOS within 1 week. **At this point John Inacio's office will advise the athlete on steps needed to come back.**
8. **No injured athlete may return to regular full-contact activity after a concussion injury without receiving medical clearance from their personal physician.** This means acquiring a doctor's note and getting the note to the LAT prior to taking the post injury test. **This will only clear the athlete physically.** They must still proceed through all the "Return to Play" steps under supervision of a coach, LAT or other party designated by the BOD.
9. Once the athlete's concussion symptoms have subsided for 7 days, ImpACT testing will be repeated to check for return of cognitive functioning to the athlete's baseline level at rest (post injury test). If the athlete does not pass the post injury test repeat testing will be performed as needed.
10. The athlete will follow the "Return to Play" guidelines as stated in appendix A. If concussion symptoms return at any point during these steps, as per "Return to Play" guidelines, the athlete returns to the previously passed step. The athlete and/or coach are to report symptoms to the LAT for re-evaluation. **Any recurrence of signs and symptoms will be reported to the LAT and the parents or guardian of the athlete.** The CN may also be advised of reoccurring symptoms.

11. Once an athlete has been cleared to return to regular sports participation, the LAT will notify the Director of Safety by e-mail.
12. Management and “Return to Play” decisions regarding athletes who have had two concussions in a calendar year will be considered on an individual basis by the LAT and CN.
13. A third concussion in the same season may result in ending athlete participation for the season. Repeat severe concussions will result in a one-year medical disqualification from the Natick Comets Hockey program. These cases should also be considered on an individual basis and reviewed by the LAT and the CN.
14. The DOS & the President of Natick Comets will be informed by the LAT, coaches, or CN of any cases involving departure from the above-listed guidelines.
15. Athletes who show extended recovery periods (generally 6 weeks or more) will be considered for graduated exercise training as deemed appropriate by the LAT, CN and personal physician, and as informed by ongoing research and clinical practice guidelines in concussion management.

Natick Comets 2015 - 2016
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Return to Play Guidelines:

For a player to begin to return to play, they must have been granted medical clearance by their physician to return to play. Following this medical clearance they must have completed a post-concussive injury ImPACT Test administered by Natick Comets licensed athletic trainer (LAT) or a specialized Concussion Management Facility and satisfactorily passed it.

Remember, to attain this point the player must be symptom free.

The following steps will provide an internationally approved protocol to safely return a player to full participation. Each step is to be performed with a minimum of 24 hours separating each step.

This time frame allows for proper assessment that no concussive symptoms have returned after each step.

If concussive symptoms recur at any step along this protocol, the athlete will regress to the previous step he/she successfully completed. They will then follow the protocol from that point. Should symptoms persist at any of the steps, referral back to the physician is indicated.

- Step 1:** Light aerobic exercise: 15 minutes
Activities may include: walking, stationary bike
If this step is done on the ice: Light skating with minimal equipment (helmet, knee pads and elbow pads) but no stick
- Step 2:** Sport specific exercise: 15 – 30 minutes
Step 1 activities may be included
Push-ups, sit ups
If this step is done on the ice: Full gear with stick but no puck handling. Agility drills, sprinting, edge work, etc.
- Step 3:** Non-Contact training drills: 30 – 45 minutes
Steps 1 and 2 activities may be included
Full gear: Passing drills, positional drills **that do not involve any player contact**
- Step 4:** Full Contact practice
Player can begin full practice participation, including full body contact
- Step 5:** Return to Play: Normal game play