

ECHO's Policy on Concussions

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Concussions can occur in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity.

ECHO exists as a youth sport organization to provide both a positive and safe experience for its young athletes.

ECHO therefore believes its obligation is to provide parents and coaches with the most appropriate resources in order to prevent, recognize and respond to concussions.

In order to fulfill this responsibility, ECHO:

Requires all coaches to review each player's helmet for fit and sufficiency at the beginning of each season, and to discuss any deficiencies with parents.

Requires coaches to conduct, as part of a pre-season family meeting, a session on concussion awareness.

Gives each coach a fact sheet for coaches prepared by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Give each parent, through their child's coach, a fact sheet for parents prepared by the CDC.

Directs Coaches to conduct player training in age appropriate checking and principles of safe play.

Requires coaches to take an on-line course designed by the CDC, and to present that certification to the Vice President of Administration.

Requires coaches to remove from play any player they suspect has, or may have, sustained a concussion.

Sponsors, at no cost to families, Impact Testing for all PeeWee (PW) and Bantam skaters. ECHO strongly recommends this testing be done on all entering PWs, prior to any potential injury.

Provides parents and coaches with additional on-line information resources to learn more about concussions. See links below:

(Note to Board: We should include the other links we had cited previously on the ImPACT testing.)

What can parents do?

Prevention:

- Parents should make sure their child's helmet fits him/her well.
- Parents of PeeWee or Bantam aged skaters should have child take a baseline ImPACT Test. In the event of a concussion, this information will be very useful to best determine the timing and advisability of return to play. Insure that your skater has a water bottle and hydrates before and during games. Studies show dehydrated athletes are at greater risk of concussion.

Recognition of Potential Injury:

- Share with your child's Coach any recent concussions or relevant concussion history.
- Support any decision by the skater's Coach(es) to remove their child from a game for safety reasons. If concerned about their child having had a concussive incident, parents may request that their child be removed from the game/practice. Should a parent remove their child from play, ECHO's policy is to not allow that child to return to play that day.

Return to Play:

- Respect the established CDC protocol for return to play, including;
 - Have him/her ImPACT tested;
 - Consult a medical professional certified in interpretation of ImPACT test results, follow his/her guidance, and get medical clearance prior to return to play;Follow the CDC protocol for return to play.

Become more informed. Parents can learn more about the issue by reading any of the links below.

What will Coaches do?

Prevention:

- Assess each player's helmet for fit prior to the season.
- Include, in a team family meeting, distribution of CDC information for parents and a discussion of concussion prevention, recognition and return to play.

Instruct players on proper, age-appropriate checking technique and principles of safe play.

Recognition of Potential Injury:

- Become educated on symptoms of concussion through the CDC on-line training.
 - Present their certificate of completion of training to the ECHO Vice President of Administration.
- Remove, from the game or practice, any skater that he/she concludes may have suffered a concussion. If the Coach is unsure of a concussion, he may sit the skater until such time that he/she can better assess the situation.

Return to Play:

Insure that skaters return to play is supported by a medical professional, and follows the CDC return to play protocol, including returning to practice before returning to game play.

Relevant/Important links:

CDC fact sheet:

http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches_Engl.pdf

CDC parents guide:

http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/parents_Eng.pdf

CDC online training:

http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html

USA Hockey Links:

http://www.usahockey.com//Template_Usahockey.aspx?NAV=ET_02_02&ID=292516

<http://impacttest.com/>

<http://elitesportsmedicine.org/>

<http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/09/22/can-concussions-in-kids-cause-problems-later-in-life/?src=mv>

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-06-08/youth-hockey-injuries-in-body-checking-study-may-spur-debate.html>