



## **Rowlett Parks and Recreation Concussion and Head Injury Protocol**

### **Purpose:**

The City of Rowlett Parks and Recreation Department recognizes that concussions and head injuries can result from contact in sports and have serious consequences if not properly evaluated and treated. This following policy has been put in place to help educate and establish a plan of action for coaches, volunteers, staff, and parents/guardians for any participant that suffers or suspected of suffering a concussion during a sporting event.

### **Policy:**

It shall be the policy of the Rowlett Parks and Recreation that all staff as well as parents/guardians of players will be familiar with the symptoms and signs of concussion and be prepared to take appropriate action as outlined below in responding to such incidents.

“When in doubt, sit them out!” Youth players are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussion. Once considered little more than a minor “ding” on the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in death, or short- and long-term changes in brain function. A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. Symptoms include (but are not limited to) transient confusion, disorientation, impaired consciousness, dysfunction of memory, loss of consciousness, seizures, irritability, lethargy, vomiting, headache, dizziness, or fatigue. Continued participation in any sporting event following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as well as increased risk for further injury to the brain and even death.

The well-being of the players is of paramount concern during a sporting event. Staff and parents/guardians are being asked to make all efforts to ensure that concussed players do not continue to participate. Thus, Staff and parents/guardians should all be looking for signs of concussion in all players and any suspected concussed player should immediately be removed from play.

All staff will be familiar with and will receive a copy of this Policy. Parents/guardians will be provided a copy of this Policy as well as the Information Sheet. These documents should be reviewed by parent/guardian before the player will be allowed to participate in a sporting event.

### **Role of Coaches, Volunteers, and Staff:**

Coaches, volunteers, and staff will NOT be expected, nor will they be trained to “diagnose” a concussion. Diagnosis is the job of a qualified health care provider. Staff are being asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs symptoms and behaviors associated with concussions. If a coach, volunteer, or staff member observes questionable signs, symptoms, or behavior, he/she must remove the player from the sporting event for further evaluation and notify the player’s parent/guardian and fill out the appropriate accident form. Staff are not permitted to allow a player to resume activity until the Rowlett Parks and Recreation receives a written

statement from a qualified health care provider indicating that the player is cleared to resume participation in the sporting event.

**Role of Officials:**

Officials will NOT be expected to “diagnose” a concussion. Officials are being asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with concussions. Officials will not be asked to give what could be perceived as a medical opinion. If an official observes questionable, signs, symptoms, or behavior, the official should notify the staff, and the player should be removed from the sporting event. Officials are not responsible for the sideline evaluation or management of the player after he/she is removed from play.

**Role of Parents/Guardians:**

Like staff, parents/guardians will NOT be expected to “diagnose” a concussion. However, parents/guardians are being asked to become familiar with the signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with concussions. Parents/guardians will be asked to review the Information Sheet. Parents/guardians will be expected to comply with this Policy and support the determination made by the staff to remove a player from a sporting event.

It is the parent/guardian’s obligation to have the player evaluated by a qualified health care provider and to obtain from that provider a written statement that clears the player to resume participation in the sporting event.

**NOTE:** Qualified health care providers should be one of the following: physician, physician’s assistant, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, physical therapist, or athletic trainer.

**Mandated Course of Action:**

1. Remove player from the sporting event.
2. Notify parent/guardian.
3. Any player suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by a qualified health care provider as soon as practicable.
4. Before a player will be allowed to resume participation in a sporting event, the parent/guardian of the player must obtain a written statement from a qualified health provider and return to the Rowlett Parks and Recreation Department indicating that the player is cleared to resume participation in the sporting event.

**NOTE:** This policy is applicable only to Rowlett Parks and Recreation Department teams, leagues, and sporting events. The Rowlett Parks and Recreation is not responsible for implementing any concussion or head injury policy for independent teams, leagues, organizations, or associations that utilize Rowlett Parks and Recreation Department fields or facilities.

# Rowlett Parks and Recreation Department Concussion & Head Injury Information Sheet

## What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head or a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth.
- Can change the way the brain normally functions
- Can occur in any sporting event
- Can happen even if you have not been knocked out
- Can be serious even if you have just been “dinged”

All concussions are serious. A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities like playing video games, working on a computer, studying, driving or exercising. Most people with a concussion get better, but it is important to give your brain time to heal.

**What are the symptoms of a concussion?** Signs and symptoms of a concussion can show right up after the injury or may not appear to be noticed until days or weeks after the injury

## Signs Observed by Parents/Guardians/Agents

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, opponent, etc.
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Cannot recall event prior to hit or fall

- Cannot recall events after hit or fall

## Symptoms Reported by Players

- Headache or pressure in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness; double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Confusion
- Does not feel right or is feeling down

## What should you, the player, do if you think you have a concussion?

- Tell your coaches or parents. Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates may have a concussion.
- Get a medical checkup. This is required before the player will be allowed to return to play.
- Give yourself time to get better. If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Additional concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get written permission from a qualified health care provider to return to play.

## What should parents/guardians do if they think their child has a concussion?

- **Seek medical attention right away.** A qualified health care provider will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.

- **Keep your child out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. You will not be permitted to let your child return to play until a qualified health care provider says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- **Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

For more information about concussions visit:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html>

### **How can you prevent a concussion?**

Follow the coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.

- Practice good sportsmanship
- Use the proper equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards and eye and mouth guards). **IN ORDER FOR EQUIPMENT TO PROTECT YOU**, it must be the right equipment for the game, position and activity; it must be worn correctly and used every time you play.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.