

Please can you share the following information to the coaching volunteers within your age grade group.

Below are **IRFU Safe Rugby guidelines** and they are to assist all players, coaches and family members to **understand the importance of recognising and properly managing players with concussion.**

Please **read and understand the information** below to ensure you, as a coach, are familiar with Safe Rugby Protocol around the area of concussion.

**Concussion** can be caused by a **blow to the head** or **from a whiplash type movement** of the head and neck that can occur when a player is **tackled or collides with another player or the ground.**

## HOW TO RECOGNISE A CONCUSSION:

**There are a number of signs and symptoms of concussion.**

If a player has any ONE of the following visible clues they must be **immediately removed from play and must not return that day.**

What you may see when the player is on the field:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Loss of consciousness</li><li>&gt; Seizure or convulsion</li><li>&gt; Balance problems</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Lying motionless on ground</li><li>&gt; Grabbing/clutching head</li><li>&gt; Slow to get up</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Unsteady on feet</li><li>&gt; Balance problems or falling over</li></ul>
When you talk to the player:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Confusion</li><li>&gt; Disorientated</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Complaining of signs &amp; symptoms listed above</li><li>&gt; Player 'just not right'</li></ul>	
What the player complains of		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Nausea (feeling sick) or vomiting</li><li>&gt; Drowsiness</li><li>&gt; Player is more emotional</li><li>&gt; Irritability</li><li>&gt; Sadness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Player is more nervous or anxious</li><li>&gt; "Doesn't feel right"</li><li>&gt; Headache</li><li>&gt; Dizziness</li><li>&gt; Feeling slowed down</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; "Pressure in head"</li><li>&gt; Blurred vision</li><li>&gt; Sensitivity to light</li><li>&gt; Amnesia</li><li>&gt; Feeling like "in a fog"</li><li>&gt; Fatigue or low energy</li></ul>
Later on:		
The signs and symptoms of concussion usually start at the time of the injury but the onset of these may be delayed for up to 24–48 hours. <b>Player may complain or you may notice;</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Any of the above mentioned</li><li>&gt; Drowsiness</li><li>&gt; Fatigue or low energy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Amnesia</li><li>&gt; Trouble sleeping</li><li>&gt; Trouble concentrating</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Feeling slowed down</li><li>&gt; Slowed reaction times</li></ul>

## RED FLAGS FOR MORE SERIOUS HEAD INJURY

Remember that not all head injuries are concussions. If a player has a more serious head injury you may observe the following red flags at the time of the event or later on:

 Unresponsive or becoming less alert.	 More than 1 episode of vomiting.	 Increasing or worsening of any complaint.
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- > Call an ambulance and do not move the unconscious player unless they are in harm's way.

## CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL 5®

To help identify concussion in children, adolescents and adults



FIFA®



FEI

### RECOGNISE & REMOVE

Head impacts can be associated with serious and potentially fatal brain injuries. The Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5) is to be used for the identification of suspected concussion. It is not designed to diagnose concussion.

#### STEP 1: RED FLAGS – CALL AN AMBULANCE

If there is concern after an injury including whether ANY of the following signs are observed or complaints are reported then the player should be safely and immediately removed from play/game/activity. If no licensed healthcare professional is available, call an ambulance for urgent medical assessment:

- Neck pain or tenderness
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs
- Severe or increasing headache
- Seizure or convulsion
- Loss of consciousness
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Vomiting
- Increasingly restless, agitated or combative

#### Remember:

- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid (danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) should be followed.
- Assessment for a spinal cord injury is critical.
- Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so.
- Do not remove a helmet or any other equipment unless trained to do so safely.

If there are no Red Flags, identification of possible concussion should proceed to the following steps:

#### STEP 2: OBSERVABLE SIGNS

Visual clues that suggest possible concussion include:

- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Disorientation or confusion, or an inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Blank or vacant look
- Balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow laboured movements
- Facial injury after head trauma

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#### STEP 3: SYMPTOMS

- Headache
- "Pressure in head"
- Balance problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Fatigue or low energy
- "Don't feel right"
- More emotional
- More irritable
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious
- Neck Pain
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Feeling slowed down
- Feeling like "in a fog"

#### STEP 4: MEMORY ASSESSMENT

(IN ATHLETES OLDER THAN 12 YEARS)

- Failure to answer any of these questions (modified appropriately for each sport) correctly may suggest a concussion:
- "What venue are we at today?"
  - "Which half is it now?"
  - "Who scored last in this game?"
  - "What team did you play last week/game?"
  - "Did your team win the last game?"

#### Athletes with suspected concussion should:

- Not be left alone initially (at least for the first 1-2 hours).
- Not drink alcohol.
- Not use recreational/ prescription drugs.
- Not be sent home by themselves. They need to be with a responsible adult.
- Not drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a healthcare professional.

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**ANY ATHLETE WITH A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PRACTICE OR PLAY AND SHOULD NOT RETURN TO ACTIVITY UNTIL ASSESSED MEDICALLY, EVEN IF THE SYMPTOMS RESOLVE**

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# WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT CONCUSSION:

## Recognise & Remove

If, at any point during a match or training, a player is concussed or has a suspected concussion, that player must be immediately and permanently removed from the field of play. This is known as "recognise and remove"



**It's the law (Law 3). The referee may enforce this rule with or without the support of the coaches to ensure that the players welfare is the primary concern at all times**



**The player MUST NOT be left alone. A player with suspected concussion should be left in the care of a responsible adult who has been informed of the players suspected concussion.**



**They MUST NOT drive a vehicle.**



**The MUST NOT consume alcohol**



**They should be medically assessed as soon as possible.**



**They MUST NOT return to play before completing the graduated return to play (GRTP). Remember that this means that the player should not return to any sport, not just rugby, without carefully completing the GRTP.**

# ROLES IN MANAGING CONCUSSION

## Player

- > As a player, if you feel that you may have suffered from a concussion, alert your coach/team medic/parent and do not play on. Players should be honest and report all signs and symptoms and should never attempt to continue playing.

## Coach:

- > If you notice that a player appears to have suffered from a concussion you must safely remove them from the field immediately, regardless of whether it is during a game or training. The player cannot return to play on this day. It is important that the player's parents/guardians are informed if the player is under 18 years of age. The IRFU concussion wallet card has a section on the back to assist with handing over a concussed player. Any player who suffers from a concussions should be handed over to a responsible adult when they leave the rugby pitch.
- > If the coach is concerned that a player may have suffered from a more serious head injury and there is no medic/physio present, they should call for the assistance of an ambulance.
- > Coaches or team medics should fill in a report form following any suspected/confirmed concussion that is forwarded to their provincial branch. This can now be done online via the IRFU website.

## Referee:

- > A well informed referee should be able to identify the signs and symptoms of concussion. Law 3 supports the referee's decision to remove any player with a suspected head injury from the field of play. The referee should clearly communicate with the team management that they are removing a player for this reason so that the player is appropriately cared for.

## Parent/guardian:

- > If you are watching your child playing and feel that they may have suffered from a concussion you should ensure that they are safely removed from the field and monitored for all signs and symptoms of concussion. Once they have been removed do not let them return to play on this day. If your child suffers from a suspected concussion you should monitor them for signs and symptoms of concussion for 48 hours. Your child should not return to any contact sport until they have completed the GRTP process. Return to school should be prioritised before return to sport.

# RESPONSIBILITIES / CHECKLISTS

## Coach:

-  **Watch IRFU concussion education videos and attend SAFE Rugby Course.**
-  **If player suffers suspected concussion remove the player safely.**
-  **Hand the player over to a responsible adult to observe during game.**
-  **Parents/guardians of underage players should be informed as soon as possible that the player has suffered from a suspected concussion and they should be advised that the child should not partake in any sport until they have completed the GRTP.**
-  **Tell parents about incident and advise on GRTP.**
-  **Fill out injury report (Injury Reporting: [www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/medical.php](http://www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/medical.php)).**
-  **Guide player through active phase of GRTP.**