

NSLL Head Injury Policy

Northshore Little League's policy is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children participating in its programs. NSLL has adopted the following procedures for managing suspected head injuries, including concussions.

A. Pre-Season. Before allowing his or her child to participate in any NSLL program, the parent or guardian registering the child must review and acknowledge the Concussion Information Sheet below at Attachment A. Before starting practices or games in any season, managers must attend a Managers' Meeting where head injury awareness will be discussed, and read the "Concussion Guide for Coaches" (Attachment B). All NSLL parents and volunteers are strongly encouraged to review the CDC resources found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html>

Managers should instruct their coaches and the team safety parent to watch for the following two things for help recognize when a concussion is suspected:

1. *A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head, and*
2. *Any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.*

B. Policy Regarding Removal From Play. A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game should immediately cease participation as follows.

- 1) If during an NSLL event, a player receives a "*forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head,*" the player's manager should investigate to determine whether the manager observes or the player reports "*any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.*" To investigate whether the player is "suspected of sustaining" an injury, the manager should ask the umpire to stop play and speak with the child to assess whether the child exhibits any symptoms of a concussion or head injury as detailed in the Concussion Decision Tree for Managers (Attachment C). The manager may, but is not required to, invite the child's parent or an available healthcare provider to participate in the assessment.
- 2) If the manager determines the child received "*a forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head*" and the child exhibits "*signs and symptoms*" of a concussion described in the Concussion Action Plan, the manager should conclude the child is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury and promptly take the following actions.
 - a. Remove the child from play, and deliver the child into the care of child's parent or guardian, informing the parent or guardian of the circumstances causing removal and recommending prompt medical assistance. If the child's parent or guardian is not immediately present, then the child should be delivered to the care of a licensed health care professional. If none is available at the site of the practice or game, 911 should be called.
 - b. Write a brief description of the circumstances and symptoms leading to removing the child from play and provide the written description to the Safety Parent and League Safety Officer. The Written Clearance For Return To Play form may be used. (See Attachment D)
 - c. Advise the parent or guardian to obtain medical care for the child and of the circumstances on which the child may return to play.
- 3) If the manager determines the contact with the child's head was **not** "*a forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head*" and the child exhibits none of the "signs and symptoms" of a concussion described in Concussion Action Plan, then the manager may conclude

the child is not “suspected of sustaining” a head injury and allow the child to continue playing with or without a substitution or injury break otherwise allowed by Little League rules.

- 4) The player’s manager’s judgment is final regarding whether a player is “*suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury,*” but the manager must remove the player if removal is requested by the player’s parent or recommended by a licensed health care provider.

C. Policy Regarding Return To Play. A youth athlete who has been removed from play should not return to play until the player is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.

- 1) “**Written Clearance**” from a health care provider should be signed by the provider and state at a minimum: (1) the provider’s name and credentials 2) the provider has been informed that a concussion or brain injury is suspected, 3) the provider has examined child, and 4) it is the provider’s professional judgment that the child may safely return to play. A Written Clearance For Return To Play form is attached for this purpose, but another form meeting the stated requirements is acceptable. (See Attachment D)
- 2) The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) recommends that the following licensed health care providers are trained in the evaluation and treatment of concussions/brain injuries and authorized to allow the athlete to return to play.
 - Medical Doctors (MD)
 - Doctor of Osteopathy (DO)
 - Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP)
 - Physicians Assistant (PA)
 - Licensed Certified Athletic Trainers (AT/L)

<http://www.wiaa.com/subcontent.aspx?SecID=628> (11/4/2014)
- 3) For purposes of this section the term “play” includes all NSLL activities occurring on the same day as the event from which the child was removed including both practices and games. Therefore, the Parent must provide to the Manger a “Written Clearance” before allowing the child to participate in NSLL activities on the same day as the event from which the child was removed from play.
- 4) If the child’s parent does not provide a Written Clearance for the child, the parent should only allow the child to participate in NSLL activities on subsequent days after providing a “Parental Clearance and Release” to the child’s manager in the form of Attachment E.
- 5) The manager will forward all Written Clearance and Parental Clearance and Release forms to the League Safety Officer who will retain them in League records for not less than three years from the date of the incident.
- 6) The matter of the child being removed from play shall be considered concluded once the League Safety Officer has received either Written Clearance or Parental Clearance for the child to return to play. However, a manager should continue to exercise extra precautions on behalf of the child even after return to play. A manager may allow any child to wear a batting helmet in the field at any time during NSLL activities, whether or not it is suspected the child has received a concussion or brain injury.

D. Legal Position. NSLL has adopted this head injury policy to advance safety for the children participating in its programs. The details of the policy are an effort to provide workable direction to parents, players and volunteers that are consistent with the Zachary Lystedt law - RCW 28A.600.190 (2010). However, because this law exists under the “Students” chapter of the Common School’s title, “a youth

athlete” is understood to be a student playing in public school events and therefore this law does not create legal duties for NSLL and nothing within this head injury policy is intended to create or admit any legal duty for any volunteer, officer or director of Northshore Little League.

E. Attachments.

- A - Concussion Information Sheet – Parents and Players
- B - Concussion Guide for Coaches
- C - Concussion Decision Tree for Managers
- D - Written Clearance For Return To Play
- E – Parental Clearance and Release

Concussion Information Sheet

Zachery Lystedt Law – Parent and Player

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches• “Pressure in head”• Nausea or vomiting• Neck pain• Balance problems or dizziness• Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision• Sensitivity to light or noise• Feeling sluggish or slowed down• Feeling foggy or groggy• Drowsiness• Change in sleep patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amnesia• “Don’t feel right”• Fatigue or low energy• Sadness• Nervousness or anxiety• Irritability• More emotional• Confusion• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)• Repeating the same question/comment

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appears dazed• Vacant facial expression• Confused about assignment• Forgets plays• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent• Moves clumsily or displays incoordination• Answers questions slowly• Slurred speech• Shows behavior or personality changes• Can’t recall events prior to hit• Can’t recall events after hit• Seizures or convulsions• Any change in typical behavior or personality• Loses consciousness

What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns to soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athlete will often under report symptoms of injuries. And concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student-athlete's safety.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. The new "Zackery Lystedt Law" in Washington now requires the consistent and uniform implementation of long and well-established return to play concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years:

"a youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time"

and

"...may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider".

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports/>



Concussion Guide for Coaches

The Facts

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in any sport.
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

Concussions are sometimes called mild traumatic brain injuries (MTBI). They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions can occur in any sport. The potential for concussions is greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common. Environmental factors also can cause injury. For example, a player may collide with an unpadded goalpost or trip on an uneven playing surface.

Sometimes people do not recognize that a bump, blow, or jolt to the head can cause a concussion. As a result, athletes may receive no medical care at the time of the injury, but they may later report symptoms such as headache and dizziness. These symptoms can be a sign of a concussion.

An estimated 300,000 sports- and recreation-related head injuries of mild to moderate severity occur in the United States each year. Most can be classified as concussions.

- Collegiate and high school football players who have had at least one concussion are at an increased risk for another concussion.
- A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—reportedly can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage, and even death. This condition is called second impact syndrome.

Signs and Symptoms

One or more of these signs and symptoms may indicate that a concussion has occurred. Remember that concussions can also occur with no obvious signs or symptoms. Any of the symptoms listed in this table should be taken seriously. Athletes who experience these signs or symptoms after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head should be kept from play until cleared by a health care professional.



SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF
Appears dazed or stunned
Is confused about assignment
Forgets plays
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
Moves clumsily
Answers questions slowly
Loses consciousness
Shows behavior or personality changes
Can't recall events prior to hit
Can't recall events after hit

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE
Headache
Nausea
Balance problems or dizziness
Double or fuzzy vision
Sensitivity to light or noise
Feeling sluggish
Feeling foggy or groggy
Concentration or memory problems
Confusion

Prevention and Preparation

As a coach, you can play a key role in preventing concussions and managing them properly when they occur. Here are some steps you can take to ensure the best outcome for your athletes, the team, and the school:

Educate the school community about concussion. Tell athletes, their parents, and other school officials about the dangers and potential long-term consequences of concussion. Make sure athletes, their parents, and school officials:

- Can recognize signs and symptoms of concussion.
- Withhold athletes from play until a health care professional has evaluated and cleared their return.
- Know to take all signs and symptoms of concussion seriously.
- Inform coaching staff if an athlete receives a blow to the head, experiences symptoms of concussion, or behaves out of the ordinary.

Coordinate with other school officials. Involve other school officials—such as principals, certified athletic trainers, other coaches, school nurses, and parent-teacher associations—to ensure that school rules and policies support concussion prevention and management strategies.

Insist that safety comes first. Teach athletes safe playing techniques and encourage them to follow the rules of play. Discourage all unsportsmanlike conduct and support strict officiating of games. Make sure athletes wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.

Teach athletes that it's not smart to play injured. Sometimes players, parents, and other school officials wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let athletes persuade you that they're "just fine" after they have sustained any bump, blow, or jolt to the head.



Prevent second impact syndrome. Keep athletes with known or suspected concussion from play until appropriate medical personnel have evaluated them and have provided permission for returning to play. Remind your athletes: It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

Prepare for concussions year-round. There are actions you can take throughout the school year that may help prevent concussions. For example:

Preseason

- Ensure that players are medically evaluated and are in good condition to participate.
- Establish an action plan for handling concussions that occur. Be sure that other appropriate school officials know about your action plan and have been trained in its use. (See "Create an Action Plan" below.)
- Explain your concerns and expectations about concussion and safe play to athletes and school officials.
- Ask if players have had one or more concussions during the previous season.
- Remind athletes to tell coaching staff if they suspect that a teammate has a concussion.
- Determine whether your school would consider conducting preseason baseline testing of brain function (neuropsychological assessment) in athletes.

During season/practice/games

- Monitor sports equipment for safety, fit, and maintenance.
- Enlist other teachers to monitor any decrease in grades that could indicate a concussion.
- Be sure appropriate staff are available for injury assessment and referrals for further medical care.
- Continue emphasizing with players, staff, and parents your concerns and expectations about concussion and safe play.
- Report concussions that occurred during the school year to appropriate school staff. This will help in monitoring injured athletes as they move to the next season's sports.

Postseason

- Work with appropriate staff to review injuries and illnesses that occurred during the season.
- Discuss any need for improvements in your action plan with appropriate health care professionals and school staff.
- Discuss with other staff any needs for better sideline preparations.

Create An Action Plan

To ensure that concussions are managed correctly, have an action plan in place before the season starts.

- Identify a health care professional to manage injuries during practice and competition.
- Fill out the pocket card enclosed in this kit and keep it with you on the field of play so that information about signs, symptoms, and emergency contacts is readily available.
- Be sure that other appropriate athletic and school staff and health care professionals know about the plan and have been trained in its use.



When a Concussion Occurs

If you suspect that a player has a concussion, implement your action plan by taking the following steps:

1. Remove the athlete from play. Learn how to recognize the signs and symptoms of concussion in your players. Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of concussion should not be allowed to return to play. When in doubt, keep the player out of play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of different methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussion.
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the known or possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion. Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional.
4. Allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from an appropriate health care professional. Prevent second impact syndrome by delaying the athlete's return to the activity until the player receives appropriate medical evaluation and approval for return to play.

Communicating Effectively about Concussions

It's important to raise awareness about sports-related concussion throughout the school community. To educate athletes, parents, principals, and other school staff about concussion prevention, look for opportunities to make presentations to each group.

Athletes. Show them the video and pass out the concussion fact sheet. Emphasize that you take this issue seriously and that you expect them to do so as well. Consider devoting a regular team meeting to this topic and inviting a health care professional to speak to your team. Use some of the following talking points to guide your discussion with athletes:

- "Every bump, blow, or jolt to the head is a potential concussion."
- "Signs and symptoms of concussion can appear right away or days or weeks after the injury. Know and look for any signs of a concussion, even if you think the injury was minor."
- "Tell coaching staff, your parents, or a health care professional if you receive a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or have signs and symptoms of concussion."
- "Tell your coach if you received a concussion in another sport."
- "You can get a concussion during drills, practices, and games. Injuries that happen during practice can be just as serious as those that happen during competition."
- "Do not play through symptoms of concussion. Your risk of having a second concussion and serious injury increases at this time."
- "It's better to miss one game than the whole season."

Parents. Send the concussion fact sheet to each athlete's family during the preseason, and again if a concussion occurs. You might also hold parent forums to let them know about your school's plans for concussion prevention and management. Consider using some of the following talking points to guide your discussion with parents:

- "We know you care about your teen's health. That is why it is so important that you talk to them about the potential dangers of concussion."
- "Every concussion should be taken seriously."



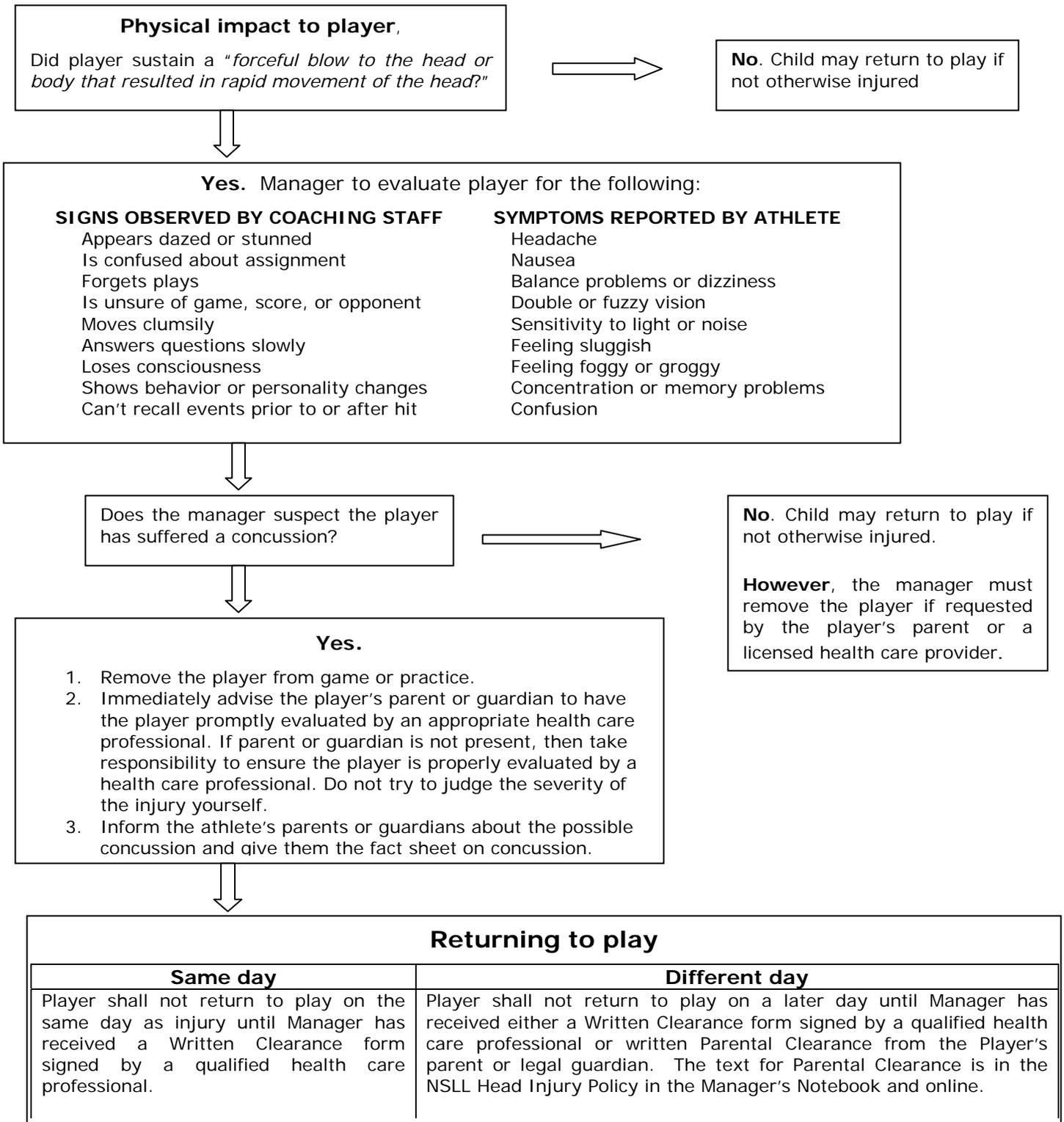
- "Know and watch for any signs and symptoms of concussion if your teen has any blow to the head. Signs and symptoms can appear right away, or days or weeks after the injury happens."
- "Discourage your teen from playing when experiencing any signs or symptoms of concussion."
- "Alert your teen's coach to any known or suspected concussion. This can help prevent second impact syndrome, which reportedly can happen when an athlete has more than one concussion over a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)."

School principal and athletic director. Look for opportunities to meet with your school principal and athletic director. Explain the seriousness of the issue and the impact that concussion in high school sports can have on the athlete, the team, and the school. Describe the action plan and your concussion education efforts and ask for the principal's support. Consider using some of these talking points in your discussion with your principal:

- "Each year more than a million high school athletes are involved in contact sports. Concussions can happen in any sport, including soccer, football, basketball, field hockey, and wrestling."
- "School staff members, working as a team with health care professionals and parents, are key to preventing or correctly managing concussions."
- "Keeping students healthy and safe helps protect the reputation of the school and provides a positive and supportive environment for learning."
- "Sometimes poor grades can be associated with cognitive problems from a concussion."
- "Sometimes behavior changes in the classroom can be due to an undiagnosed concussion."
- "It's ideal to have a health care professional available during athletic activities—both practice and actual competition."
- "Communication should be established among coaches of different sports so an athlete does not go from one sport to another with a concussion."
- "Coaches of all relevant sports should be encouraged to distribute educational materials about concussion to athletes and parents."

Text copied from http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/CGToolKit/Coaches_Guide.htm, 1/13/2010, references and additional resources available at www.cdc.gov.

Concussion Decision Tree For Managers



Note: This decision tree is an incomplete summary. Read "NSLL Head Injury Policy" for a full explanation of the NSLL Head Injury Policy. Read "Concussion Guide for Coaches" for more detail on head injuries.

**Written Clearance For Return to Play
Following Suspected Concussion**

Player: _____ Date of Incident: _____

Location of Incident: _____

The Player, while participating in an activity of Northshore Little League was observed to sustain a “forceful blow to the head or body that resulted in rapid movement of the head.”

The forceful blow occurred during a Game Practice Other _____

The circumstances, signs and symptoms reported or observed that lead to removal from play were as follows:

I am a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions. I have been informed that the Player is suspected of receiving a concussion or brain injury.

I have examined the Player and it is my professional judgment that the Player
 May safely return to play Immediately After Date: _____

or
 Should receive further medical evaluation before returning to play

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Medical Certifications: _____

Date of Signature: _____

A youth athlete who has been removed from play may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider. The health care provider may be a volunteer. A volunteer who authorizes a youth athlete to return to play is not liable for civil damages resulting from any act or omission in the rendering of such care, other than acts or omissions constituting gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.

RCW 28A.600.190(4) (2010)

Parental Clearance And Release

For Return to Play Following Suspected Concussion

I am the custodial parent or guardian of _____
(date of birth _____) who was suspected of receiving a concussion or brain
injury on _____.

I have taken full responsibility for my child’s health care, including determining
whether it is safe for my child to resume participation in NSLL activities. I believe
it is safe for him / her to return to play and assume sole responsibility for any
adverse effects he or she may experience from returning to play either too soon or
without receiving written clearance from a health care professional.

I further waive any claims I may have against NSLL or its volunteers, officers or
directors and agree to defend, indemnify and hold each of them harmless from any
loss, damages or injury that may result to my child by resuming participation in
NSLL activities.

Signed by Parent: _____ Date: _____

Printed: _____