

Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission Concussion Management Policy

Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission has established a policy that will provide information and resources to deal with the issues of concussion prevention, recognition and treatment. This policy will govern all sponsored Lexington County youth sports.

This policy will provide guidelines involving how to recognize signs and symptoms of a concussion and procedures for dealing with individuals and/or parents when a concussion is suspected, as well as mandatory rules regarding the return to play/activity for the participant.

A concussion can be caused by a blow to the head, jolt to the body, or any sudden force that results in a rapid acceleration/deceleration of the brain inside the skull. This impact of the brain against the rigid inside walls of the skull can cause a change in neurological function and a host of other symptoms depending on which part of the brain was injured. Youth athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of a concussion. Even what appears to be very minor “bump” or hit, it can cause catastrophic results when an athlete is returned to action too soon.

Second Impact Syndrome, which in some cases can be fatal, is a direct result of returning to activity or participation before all symptoms have cleared. This is especially true for those under 14 years of age. Therefore, continued participation in any sport / activity 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 athlete is our greatest concern during any practice game or activity. Coaches’, officials, volunteers and parents are being asked to make all efforts to ensure that concussed athletes do not continue to participate. Thus, coaches, parents, volunteers and officials should also be looking for signs of concussion in all participants and should immediately remove any suspected concussed participant from play or activity.

If a Coach, Official or volunteer observes questionable signs, symptoms, or behavior, or a mechanism/vicious hit or impact which could cause a concussion he/she must remove the participant from the game or activity for further evaluation and notify the parent/guardian and the Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission Program Supervisor.

Coaches, Officials, parents or Volunteers will NOT be expected to “diagnose” a concussion. That is the job of an appropriate health-care professional. However, they will be asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs, symptoms and behaviors, associated with concussions.

These are the steps that should be followed when Coaches, Coaching Staff, Officials, Parents or Volunteers believe a player has a concussion:

1. Remove player/participant from activity/competition.
2. When available, an Athletic Trainer, Physician, Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner shall evaluate the player/participant for concussion signs and symptoms.
 - a. If the player/participant exhibits any 1 sign or symptom, they may not return to play/activities that day.
 - b. Observe player/participant for 20-30 minutes after the player has been removed from activity/competition.

3. Notify Parent or Guardian when it is someone underage (any participant under 18 years old)
4. Notify appropriate Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission Staff
5. Fill out appropriate injury/incident report for Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission
6. Any participant suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate healthcare professional within 72 hours of the "injury".
 - a. Note: an appropriate healthcare professional should be knowledgeable in the evaluation and management of sports-related concussions and may include MD's, DO's, NP, PA and certified athletic trainers.
 - b. Any participant with a concussion must be medically cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional prior to completing the return to play (RTP) stages and resuming participation in any practice, game or league play. This clearance shall be in the form of a written letter signed by the healthcare professional (MD, DO). A copy of this letter must be supplied to the Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission program supervisor prior to resuming/starting day 5 of the 5 Day Gradual Return to Play Procedure.
7. At this point the recommended 5 day gradual return to play, supervised by the coach/parent/activity leader, and must take place. The documentation of what was done on each day must signed by coach/parent/activity leader. The 5 day gradual return to play form is available from Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission. When the fifth day has been completed ALL the supporting documentation must be turned into the Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission supervisor for athlete to be cleared to take part in activities associated with Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission.

5 Day Gradual Return to Play Procedure:

The Gradual Return to Play Procedure shall begin when the athlete is symptom-free and has been evaluated by an appropriate healthcare professional (MD's, DO's, NP, PA or Athletic Trainer). During the gradual Return to play Procedure the athlete may not progress to the next stage until 24 hours has passed (two stages cannot be completed in one day).

If any symptom of a concussion recurs, or if concussion signs and/or behaviors are observed at any time during the return-to-activity program, the athlete must discontinue all activity immediately.

If symptoms recur at any step, the athlete must return to prior day activities they completed without a recurrence of any sign or symptom after a 24-hour period has passed.

Below are the days and activities suggested for the **5 Day Gradual Return to Play Procedure:**

Day 1: Light aerobic activity: Walking, swimming, exercise bike; keeping exertion for 10-15 min

Day 2: Moderate aerobic activity and light resistance training: 20 min, exertional drills in sport, (e.g., running drills in football/soccer, skating drills in hockey). 10-20 min calisthenics (jumping jacks, sit-ups, mountain climbers, burpees)

Day 3: Sport-specific exercises NON-contact training drills: Progression to more complex noncontact drills (passing / catching drills in football, shooting/passing in basketball, hitting drills in volleyball)

Day 4: Limited full-contact practice. (Note: The participant/athlete must have a Doctors clearance note and the Return to Play paperwork turned into Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission Staff/Supervisor to move on to day 5 of the Gradual Return to Play Procedure.)

Day 5: Full contact practice: "Game like" activity

Day 6: Return to full sport participation.

Required Training

All Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission coaches, volunteers and Independent Leagues who participate in organized youth athletic activities sponsored by Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission shall complete an annual training on the prevention and recognition of sports-related head injuries and the associated health risks, including second impact syndrome. Documentation of such training shall be maintained by the Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission.

All coaches, volunteers and Independent Leagues participating in youth athletic activities sponsored by the Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission shall be required to complete annual concussion education training through one or more of the following approved programs:

1. CDC's concussion education training: www.cdc.gov/concussion
 - a. Use the Concussion in Youth Sports training module. Then choose Launch the Course on right hand side.
2. NFHS concussion course: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61064/concussion-in-sports>
 - a. This course is more geared toward High School coaches.
3. Concussion education event sponsored by the Department with Sport Medical Professional

In addition, Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission, Independent Leagues, and Organizations shall provide to all coaches, volunteers, athletes, and their parents or legal guardian, an information sheet on concussions. The information sheet shall inform them of the nature and risk of concussions and brain injury, including the risks associated with continuing to play after a concussion or brain injury has been sustained. This will be done annually and prior to the start of each athletic season. The parent or legal guardian's receipt of the information sheet must be documented in writing or by electronic means before the athlete is permitted to participate in an athletic competition or practice. All information sheets must be signed and submitted to Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission Staff, Independent Leagues or Organizations.

Independent Organizations:

Independent Leagues and Organizations that are under the jurisdiction of the Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission are required to provide the agency with a compliance form verifying the completion of concussion training by their staff, coaches, and volunteers. Independent Leagues and Organizations must also verify all coaches, volunteers, athletes and their parents or legal guardians have been provided an informational sheet on concussions. The compliance form must be signed by the Independent Leagues board of directors or responsible party.

Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission Helmet Recertification Policy:

Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission recommends all Independent Leagues, Organizations and parents to follow the recommendations from the NOCSAE and helmet manufactures regarding helmet recertification. NOCSAE standards include recertification standards for helmets used in football, baseball, softball, ice hockey and lacrosse.

National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE)

Recertified helmets must have a recertification label that includes the name of the recertifying firm and the year of recertification. This seal may be placed on the interior or exterior of the shell in an area in which it can be easily read without removal of any permanent component and will also contain the following language: "This helmet has been recertified according to procedures established to meet the NOCSAE Standard."

NOCSAE urges that the warning statement be shared with members of the football, baseball, softball and lacrosse squads and that all coaches alert participants to the potential for injury. The wording of the warning label as set forth in the NOCSAE standard specifies the core information that must be conveyed by the label, but permits a manufacturer to add or supplement the content as it determines necessary.

WARNING

**NO HELMET CAN PREVENT ALL HEAD OR ANY
NECK INJURIES A PLAYER MIGHT RECEIVE
WHILE PARTICIPATING IN FOOTBALL.**

**DO NOT USE THIS HELMET TO BUTT, RAM OR
SPEAR AN OPPOSING PLAYER. THIS IS IN
VIOLATION OF THE FOOTBALL RULES AND SUCH
USE CAN RESULT IN SEVERE HEAD OR NECK
INJURIES, PARALYSIS OR DEATH TO YOU AND
POSSIBLE INJURY TO YOUR OPPONENT.**