



## **Potomac Soccer Association Sports Concussion Policy (2016)**

Potomac Soccer Association (“PSA”) is committed to safe practice and provides a Sports Concussion Policy to educate parents, student-athletes, and coaches about the nature and risks of concussions, and procedures to detect and treat these brain injuries prior to safe return to play. Coaches, parents and student-athletes form a team to work together to identify concussions once they occur and ensure safe return to play.

It is the PSA’s policy that if a student-athlete exhibits any sign of concussion or reports any symptom, he/she will be removed from practice or play. Parents are notified on the day of the injury. The parents will obtain proper medical evaluation by a licensed health care professional with training in concussion evaluation and management. PSA acknowledges that clearance to return to play is a medical decision. The licensed health care professional who evaluates the youth athlete is the only individual to provide clearance. PSA will not allow the student-athlete to participate in a practice or game while experiencing any lingering or persisting symptoms of a concussion, no matter how slight. The student-athlete must be completely symptom free at rest and during physical and mental exertion, with neurocognitive functioning that has returned to their normal baseline, prior to return to sports activities.

PSA recognizes that a concussion is a traumatic brain injury that presents a serious risk to athletes and is committed to safe practices to minimize such risk. Accordingly, PSA has adopted the following Sports Concussion Policy & Procedures, in accordance with the DC Concussion Protection Act of 2011:

### **Concussion education/ training of key stakeholders**

To prepare responsible persons to comply with the recognition and removal of a suspected concussion, PSA will provide education and training of parents, youth-athletes, and coaches about the nature and risks of concussions, and procedures to detect and treat these brain injuries prior to safe return to play. Whether a concussion occurs on or off the field, parents, athletes and coaches should work together to identify suspected concussions and ensure a safe return to play.

The PSA’s Education & Training Program includes the following fundamental components:

1. Training of coaches in Concussion Recognition & Response – i.e., concussion risks, recognition of signs & symptoms and response to a suspected concussion.
2. Concussion Recognition & Response training can be accomplished in one of three modalities: (i) direct education and training in a seminar by a concussion expert, (ii) through trained Stoddert “Master Safety Coaches” who are trained to deliver the concussion training, and (iii) online education with an approved concussion education program (e.g., CDC Heads Up to Coaches video). PSA will determine the most appropriate modality to maximize effective training.
3. Education of parents/guardian and athletes on concussion risks, recognition of signs and symptoms, and post-injury management for sports and school. Parents and athletes must read, sign and submit to the league the Parent-Athlete Concussion Information Sheet before the first practice.

## Concussion Recognition & Response

PSA follows the following concussion recognition & response procedures:

If during a PSA athletic activity (tryouts, practice, game), an athlete is suspected to have sustained a “concussion,” meaning a traumatic injury to the brain as a result of:

1. a fall, a blow or jolt to the head or body, the shaking or spinning of the head or body, or the acceleration and deceleration of the head,
2. causing a change in neurological or mental status at the time of injury such as poor balance, feeling dazed, disoriented or confused, which may or may not involve a loss of consciousness;

### **the following 4 action steps must be taken:**

1. the athlete is to be removed from practice or play immediately,
2. the parent/ guardian is to be informed same day of injury,
3. the athlete is not permitted to participate further in the athletic activity until they have been evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in evaluation and management of concussion, and
4. written clearance to return to physical/ sport participation is received from that health care provider.

## Tracking and Recordkeeping

1. All coach training and parent/ athlete education will be tracked on an annual basis
2. PSA will provide for recordkeeping and the collection of the specified clearance before the athlete will be permitted to return to physical/ sport participation in a PSA athletic event.

## Baseline testing

PSA will determine the feasibility, mechanism, logistics and possible vendors for obtaining credible and valid baseline testing. As described by the CDC “Baseline testing is a pre-season exam conducted by a trained health care professional. Baseline tests are used to assess an athlete’s balance and brain function (including learning and memory skills, ability to pay attention or concentrate, and how quickly he or she thinks and solve problems), as well as for the presence of any concussion symptoms. Results from baseline tests (or pre-injury tests) can be used and compared to a similar exam conducted by a health care professional during the season if an athlete has a suspected concussion. Baseline tests should only be conducted by a trained health care professional. Only a trained health care professional with experience in concussion management should interpret the results of a baseline exam. When possible, ideally a neuropsychologist should interpret the computerized or paper-pencil neuropsychological test components of a baseline exam.”

Education will be provided to the parents on the potential benefits of baseline testing and the necessary circumstances governing appropriate test procedures most likely to produce the reliable and valid test results.

More information on concussions in youth sports can be found at [www.cdc.gov/headsup](http://www.cdc.gov/headsup) and [www.childrensnational.org/score](http://www.childrensnational.org/score).

## PSA Sports Concussion Policy

### Concussion Education & Management Activities & Responsibilities

| Activity   | Responsible Party  | Date  | Evidence of Completion   |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Preseason</b>   |  |   |  |
| 1. Concussion Program Policies & Procedures (P&P)  | League Administration  | Prior to start of season  | Written policy in league manual; copy provided to all coaching staff                 |
| 2. Examine/ review coaching methods to teach safe technique & skills; proper use of equipment                | League administration, coaching director/ staff                                  | Prior to start of season  | Written policies on coaching methods, techniques & skills                            |
| 3. Coaching Education & Training as per 1 of 3 modalities (direct, train-the-trainer, online Video training) | Coach  | Prior to start of season  | Verification of completion provided to league  |
| 4. Parent-Athlete Education (Online video training, CDC Parent, Athlete Fact Sheet)                          | Parent, athlete  | Prior to first practice   | Signed Parent-Athlete Concussion Information Form                                    |
| 5. Develop list of concussion resources for education, consultation & referral (medical, school, BIADC)      | League administration  | Preseason   | List of resources provided in Policies & Procedures; available to coaches & families |
| <b>In-Season</b>   |  |   |  |
| 1. Review concussion policy and procedures   | Coach, league commissioner   | First day of practice, first parent meeting                     | Verbal Report, sign in sheet   |
| 2. On-field observation, removal of suspected concussion (CDC S&S clipboard sticker, CRR App)                | Coach  | Immediate, when first suspected                                 | Document on Injury reporting form  |
| 3. Parent informed of injury, given written instructions for initial action, medical evaluation recommended  | Coach  | Day of injury   | Parent provided ACE Post-Concussion Home/ School Instructions                        |
| 4. Parent provides Coach written clearance for Gradual Return to Play  | Parent, Coach  | At Recovery   | Signed Written Clearance Form provided to coach/ league                              |
| <b>Post – Injury Management (Medical, Family, School)</b>  |  |   |  |
| <b>Note: PSA not responsible for post-injury management but needs to be aware of process</b>                 |  |   |  |
| 1. Medical evaluation & management   | Licensed health care professional with concussion training                       | Early post-injury to recovery                                   | Medical documentation  |
| 2. School return & management; student-specific education & training (School toolkit, ACE Care Plan)         | School health aide/ nurse, guidance counselor/ asst principal, classroom teacher | Prior to / at time of student-athlete return to school          | Medical documentation  |
| 3a. Clearance to begin gradual Return to Play program  | Licensed health care professional with concussion training                       | When medically determined to be asymptomatic at rest            | Medical documentation  |
| 3b. Clearance to Return to Full Competition  | Licensed health care professional with concussion training                       | When medically determined to be asymptomatic with full exertion | Medical documentation  |