

## OCONEE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

### CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT AND RETURN TO PLAY POLICY

Georgia House Bill 284, Return to Play Act of 2013, states each public recreation facility shall, at the time of registration for a youth athletic activity, provide an information sheet to all youth athletes' parents or legal guardians which informs them of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury; provided, however, that public recreation facilities are strongly encouraged to establish and implement a concussion management and return to play policy.

This Code section shall not create any liability for, or create a cause of action against, a local board of education, the governing body of a nonpublic school, the governing body of a charter school, or a public recreation facility or the officers, employees, volunteers, or other designated personnel of any such entities for any act or omission to act related to the removal or non-removal of a youth athlete from a game, competition, tryout, or practice pursuant to this Code section; provided, however, that for purposes of this subsection, other designated personnel shall not include health care providers unless they are acting in a volunteer capacity.

#### Definitions

Public recreation facility	A public facility that conducts an organized youth athletic activity in which a participation fee and registration are required.
Youth athlete	A participant in a youth athletic activity who is 7 to 18 years of age.
Youth athletic activity	Organized athletic activity in which the majority of the participants are youth athletes and are engaging in an organized athletic game or competition against another team, club, or entity or in practice or preparation for an organized game or competition against another team, club, or entity. This term shall not include an activity which is entered into for instructional purposes only, an athletic activity that is incidental to a nonathletic program, or a lesson.
Healthcare provider	A licensed physician or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and management.

In compliance with the passage of House Bill 284, and to ensure the ongoing safety of our youth sport participants, the following protocols went into effect on January 1, 2014:

1. At the time of registration, a concussion informational sheet emphasizing the risks of concussions shall be distributed to the parents/guardians of all youth athletes ages 7 to 18. Concussion information will also be provided for online registrations during the online registration process.
2. Any youth athlete who participates in youth athletics and exhibits signs of a concussion must be removed from the game, practice, competition or activity and must be evaluated by a healthcare provider.
3. Any youth athlete who is deemed by a healthcare provider as sustaining a concussion shall not be permitted to return to play until he/she no longer has concussion symptoms and provides written clearance from a health care provider for a full or graduated return to play.

## Concussions

Concussions are a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth, changing the way the brain normally works.

### Concussion Information

- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.
- Signs and symptoms can show up right after the injury or may not appear until days or weeks later.
- If an athlete has a concussion, his/her brain needs time to heal. Rest is key in recovering.
- While an athlete's brain is still healing, s/he is much more likely to have another concussion.
- Athletes who have, at any point in their lives, had a concussion have an increased risk for another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes to recover.
- Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults.
- Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.
- In rare cases, repeat concussions in young athletes can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage or can even be fatal.

### Concussion Signs and Symptoms

SIGNS OBSERVED BY STAFF/COACH/PARENT	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETES
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or "pressure" in head
Is confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction or play	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can't recall events prior to hit or fall	Confusion
Can't recall events after hit or fall	Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"

### The Following Danger Signs Represent a Medical Emergency

- One pupil is larger than the other
- Drowsiness or inability to be awakened
- A headache that not only does not diminish, but gets worse
- Weakness, numbness or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Inability to recognize people or places
- Increasingly confused, restless or agitated
- Unusual behavior
- Loss of consciousness

## Action Steps

If you suspect that a player has a concussion, you should take the following steps:

1. Remove athlete from play.
2. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform athlete's parents or guardians about the known or possible concussion and provide the parent/guardian with the fact sheet on suspected concussion.
4. Advise the parents or guardians on the importance of seeking medical attention.
5. Allow athlete to return to play only with written permission from an appropriate health care professional trained in concussion management.

***It is better to miss one game than the whole season. When in doubt, sit them out.***

For more information on concussions, visit: [www.cdc.gov/headsup](http://www.cdc.gov/headsup)

## Required Concussion Training – OCPRD Staff

- All full-time program staff that are responsible for coordinating youth athletic activities are required to complete the CDC Heads Up Online Training Course for Concussions in Youth Sports within 2 weeks of hire.
- All part-time staff responsible for supervising youth programs are required to complete the CDC Heads Up Online Training Course for Concussion in Youth Sports within 2 weeks of hire.

### ***Heads Up Online Training Course - Get prepared for the new season in less than 30 minutes***



*Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports* is a free, online course available to coaches, parents, and others helping to keep athletes safe from concussion. It features interviews with leading experts, dynamic graphics and interactive exercises, and compelling storytelling to help you recognize a concussion and know how to respond if you think that your athlete might have a concussion. Once you complete the training and quiz, you can print out a certificate, making it easy to show your league or school you are ready for the season.

<https://www.train.org/cdctrain/course/1089818/details>

## Required Concussion Training – Coaches/Officials

- All coaches, instructors and non-association assigned officials for youth athletic activities are required to complete one of free online concussion training courses listed below, or another concussion training course that has been pre-approved by OCPRD.
- Each coach, instructor, and/or official must provide OCPRD with a copy of the printed certification verifying that s/he completed the online concussion training prior to the start of the season.

### ***Free Online Training Course Options – Coaches/Officials***

- CDC Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports
- <https://www.train.org/cdctrain/course/1089818/details>
- NFHS Concussions in Youth Sports: What You Need to Know, elective course
- <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/concussion-in-sports-2>
- NAYS Concussion Training for NYSCA Coaches
- <https://www.nays.org/concussion-training>