**CONCUSSION**

**A Fact Sheet for Coaches**

**RECOGNIZING A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION**

To help recognize a concussion, watch for the following two events among your student-athletes during both games and practices:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head;

-AND-

1. Any change in the student-athlete’s behavior, thinking or physical functioning (see signs and symptoms).

**SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

**Signs Observed By Coaching Staff**

* Appears dazed or stunned.
* Is confused about assignment or position.
* 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 before or after injury.

**Symptoms Reported By Student-Athlete**

* Headache or “pressure” in head.
* Nausea or vomiting.
* Balance problems or dizziness.
* Double or blurry vision.
* Sensitivity to light.
* Sensitivity to noise.
* Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy.
* Concentration or memory problems.
* Confusion
* Does not “feel right”.

**PREVENTION AND PREPARATION**

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

* Educate student-athletes and coaching staff about concussions. Explain your concerns about concussions and your expectations of safe play to student-athletes, athletics staff and assistant coaches. Create an environment that supports reporting, access to proper evaluation and conservative return-to-play.
	+ Review and practice your emergency action plan.
	+ Know when you will have sideline medical care and when you will not.
	+ Emphasize that protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
	+ Review with your athletics staff the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook guideline: Concussion or Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI) in the Athlete.
* Insist that safety comes first.
	+ Teach student-athletes safe-play techniques and encourage them to follow the rules of play.
	+ Encourage student-athletes to practice good sportsmanship.
	+ Encourage student-athletes to immediately report symptoms of concussion.
* Prevent long-term problems. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the previous one (hours, days or weeks) can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage and even death.

**WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?**

A concussion is a brain injury that may be caused by a blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an “impulsive” force transmitted to the head. Concussions can also result from hitting a hard surface such as the ground, ice or floor, from players colliding with each other or being hit by a piece of equipment such a bat, lacrosse stick or field hockey ball.

**IF A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED:**

1. Remove the student-athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the student-athlete is evaluated as soon as possible by an appropriate health care professional.
3. Allow the student-athlete to return to play ONLY with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating concussions.
4. Symptoms that warrant immediately activation of emergency medial services include but are not limited to:
	1. Loss of consciousness
	2. Irregular pupils
	3. Vomiting
	4. Changes in personality or mental status
5. **REMEMBER:** “When in doubt, sit them out”

For more information and resources, visit [www.NCAA.org/health-safety](http://www.NCAA.org/health-safety) and [www.CDC.gov/Concussion](http://www.CDC.gov/Concussion).

This Fact Sheet is based on the NCAA Concussion Fact Sheet for Coaches

I understand that it is my responsibility to be familiar with this Fact Sheet and, in particular, to follow the guidelines given above under the head ‘If A Concussion is Suspected.”

Coach’s Printed Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Coach’s Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_