CONCUSSION

A fact sheet for Student-Athletes

**WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?**

**A concussion is a brain injury that:**

• Is caused by a blow to the head or body.

– From contact with another player, hitting a hard surface such as the ground, ice or floor, or being hit by a piece of equipment such as a bat, lacrosse stick or field hockey ball.

• Can change the way your brain normally works.

• Can range from mild to severe.

• Presents itself differently for each athlete.

• Can occur during practice or competition in ANY sport.

• Can happen even if you do not lose consciousness.

**HOW CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?**

**Basic steps you can take to protect yourself from concussion:**

• Do not initiate contact with your head or helmet. You can still get a concussion if you are wearing a helmet.

• Avoid striking an opponent in the head. Undercutting, flying elbows, stepping on a head, checking an unprotected opponent, and sticks to the head all cause concussions.

• Follow your athletics department’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.

• Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

• Practice and perfect the skills of the sport.

**WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?**

You can’t see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury.

Concussion symptoms include:

• Amnesia.

• Confusion.

• Headache.

• Loss of consciousness.

• Balance problems or dizziness.

• Double or fuzzy vision.

• Sensitivity to light or noise.

• Nausea (feeling that you might vomit).

• Feeling sluggish, foggy or groggy.

• Feeling unusually irritable.

• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays, facts, meeting times).

• Slowed reaction time.

Exercise or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games may cause concussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness) to reappear or get worse.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?**

**Don’t hide it.** Tell your athletic trainer and coach**.** Never ignore a blow to the head. Also, tell your athletic trainer and coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that you can get checked out.

**Report it.** Do not return to participation in a game, practice or other activity with symptoms. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to return to play.

**Get checked out.** Your team physician, athletic trainer, or health care professional can tell you if you have had a concussion and when you are cleared to return to play. A concussion can affect your ability to perform everyday activities, your reaction time, balance, sleep and classroom performance.

**Take time to recover.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a repeat concussion. In rare cases, repeat concussions can cause permanent brain damage, and even death. Severe brain injury can change your whole life.

For more information and resources, visit www.NCAA.org/health-safety and www.CDC.gov/Concussion.

\*Information taken from NCAA Concussion Fact Sheet for Student - Athletes

I understand that there is a possibility that participation in my sport may result in a head injury and/or concussion. I have read and understand the NCAA concussion factsheet for student-athletes (above) and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about this issue that are not clear to me.

Student-Athlete Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student-Athlete Signature: Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_