



Ontario Grappling Association (OGA)

Concussion Policy and Return to Competition/training

Concussion refers to a disturbance in brain function that results from trauma to the brain. Usually the changes are temporary and the majority of fighters recover completely if managed correctly.

The Ontario Grappling Association (OGA) will encourage all members to adopt the following practices to prevent, recognise and manage concussion.

This policy will be distributed to all current and new members.

- All club members, staff and officials will be given the opportunity to attend approved training and accreditation courses in concussion management.
- Appropriate first aid equipment will be made available at all training and competition sessions.
- Appropriate first aid trained personnel will be in attendance at all training and competition sessions.
- A Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool will be included in all first aid kits.
- A pre-fight checklist will be provided to all coaching and support staff involved in the match day care of athletes (and kept with the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool). This checklist should include contact details for the local general practices, local hospital emergency departments and ambulance services.
- The club will utilise all available Concussion Management Resources including the Concussion Poster and the Guidelines for Athletes/Parents.
- All athletes will complete a pre-season medical history form and injury records will be maintained throughout the season. All maintained on PasSport.
- All athletes assessed to have a concussion by a registered medical doctor must present a return to competition/training clearance form to your nominated club official.
- This Concussion Policy will be reviewed and updated as required every 12 months.



Competition Day Management

The most important steps in the initial management of concussion include;

1. Recognising the injury
2. Removing the athlete from the training/fight.
3. Referring the athlete to a medical doctor for assessment.

1. Recognising the injury

Any one or more of the following can indicate a possible concussion:

- Loss of consciousness
- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Headache, blurred vision, dizziness
- Confused/not aware of competition/trainings or events
- Balance problems (unsteadiness)
- Lying motionless on ground/slow to get up
- Grabbing or clutching head

Tool such as the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool can be used to help recognise concussion.

It is important to note however that brief sideline evaluation tools are designed to recognise a concussion but they cannot replace a comprehensive medical assessment.

2. Removing the athlete from the competition

Initial management must adhere to the first aid rules, including airway, breathing, circulation and spinal immobilisation.

Any athlete with a suspected concussion must be removed from the competition. (see section below for management of the unconscious athlete).



Removing the athlete from the competition allows the opportunity to properly evaluate the athlete.

Any athlete who has suffered a concussion must not be allowed to return to competition/training in the same competition.

It is important not to be influenced by the athlete, coaching staff, trainers, parents or any others suggesting that they return to competition/training. If there is any doubt, sit them out!

With unconscious athletes, the athlete must only be moved (onto the stretcher) by qualified health professionals, trained in spinal immobilisation techniques. If no qualified health professional is on site, then do not move the athlete – call and await arrival of the ambulance.

3. Refer the athlete

All athletes with concussion or a suspected concussion need a medical assessment by a registered medical doctor.

If a doctor is not present at your event then the athlete should be sent to a local general practice or local hospital emergency department.

Urgent transfer to hospital is required if the athlete discontinues any of the following symptoms:

- Loss of consciousness or seizures
- Confusion
- Deterioration following their injury (eg vomiting, increased headaches or drowsiness)
- Neck pain or spinal cord symptoms (eg numbness, tingling or weakness)

If there is any doubt on the athlete's condition they should be referred to hospital.

Follow Up Management

4. Rest



Rest is very important after a concussion because it helps the brain to heal. Concussions affect people differently. While most athletes with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days or even weeks.

A more serious concussion can last for months or longer. It is important that athletes do not ignore their symptoms and in general a more conservative approach be used in cases where there is any uncertainty.

5. Return

A concussed athlete must not be allowed to return to competition/training before having a medical clearance. In every case, the decision regarding the timing of return to competition/training should be made by a medical doctor with experience in managing concussion.

Athletes should not return to competition until they have returned to training

Athletes should be returned to sport in a graduated manner that should be supervised by their medical practitioner.

For example:

- Rest until all symptoms resolve
- Light aerobic activity 24 hours after symptoms resolve
- Light non-contact training (eg ball work)
- Non-contact training drills
- Full contact training
- Return to competition

It is important to note there should be approximately 24 hours between stages.

If an athlete becomes symptomatic at any stage they should drop back to the previous symptom free level and try to progress again after 24 hours.

If a athlete continues to be symptomatic for more than 10 days they should be reviewed again by a medical practitioner.



Concussion Response Tool

Athlete Name: _____ Age: _____

Name of parent/guardian:

Name of person monitoring athlete at scene:

Date of incident: _____

Time: _____

Description of incident: Blow to the head Hit to the body

What happened?

Step 1: Determine if this is a medical emergency

a) Follow basic first aid:

- Danger
- Response
- Airway
- Breathing
- Circulation

b) CALL 911 if the athlete shows any of these Red Flag Symptoms at any time

AT THE EVENT

RED FLAG SYMPTOMS

You see:



- Repeated vomiting
- Seizure or convulsion
- Deteriorating or loss of consciousness

The athlete complains of:

- Neck pain
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling/burning in the arms or legs
- Severe or increasing headache

The athlete is showing:

- Unusual behavior
- Increasing confusion or irritability

c) If there is serious injury OR any of the Red Flags:

- Call 911
- Do not move the athlete
- Stay with the injured athlete and monitor them until Emergency Services arrives
- Do not remove the athlete's helmet unless you are trained to do so (if used)

Step 2: Remove the athlete from competition/training or activity

If the injury is NOT an emergency, remove the athlete from competition/training and do not let them return to competition/training that day. The athlete needs to be seen by a doctor as soon as possible. While the athlete is waiting to be taken to a doctor follow instructions in Step 3.

Step 3: Monitor the athlete

Do not leave the athlete alone and ensure they are with a responsible adult at all times. In addition to the Red Flags, watch for the following signs and symptoms and check off any that appear.



a) Record what you see

- Loss of consciousness
- Lying motionless on ground
- Slow to get up
- Balance problems
- Uncoordinated movement
- Grabbing or clutching head
- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Confusion

b) Record what the athlete is saying

- Headache
- Dizzy
- Confused
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sick
- Don't feel right
- Difficulty concentrating
- Numbness in arms or legs
- Tired or drowsy

c) Ask these questions to test memory

Failure to answer any of these questions correctly may suggest a concussion. Repeat periodically and tick response.

5 to 12 years old

Where are we now?



Is it before or after lunch?

What did you have last lesson/class?

What is your teacher's name?

13 years old and over

What venue are you at today?

Which half is it now?

Who scored last in this competition?

What team did you compete against last week/competition?

Did your team win the last competition?

Step 4: Refer to parent/guardian

The parent or guardian should take the athlete to a doctor for assessment as soon as possible. Ideally this should be done on the same day as the injury and may require taking the athlete to an Emergency Department if they are unable to access their own doctor.

Do not leave your athlete alone. Keep them in a calm environment. Do not let your athlete drive or return to activities.

Do not give your athlete any medication unless directed by a doctor. There is evidence that some medications can worsen concussion symptoms and could increase potential risks associated with brain injuries.

CALL 911 if the athlete shows any of these Red Flag Symptoms at any time

AT HOME

RED FLAG SYMPTOMS

You see:

- Repeated vomiting
- Seizure or convulsion
- Deteriorating or loss of consciousness



The athlete complains of:

- Neck pain
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling/burning in the arms or legs
- Severe or increasing headache

The athlete is showing:

- Unusual behavior
- Increasing confusion or irritability

Monitor for signs and symptoms

If your athlete shows one of the following symptoms, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Thinking and Remembering

- Not thinking clearly
- Feeling slowed down
- Unable to concentrate
- Unable to remember new information

Physical

- Headache
- Fuzzy or blurry vision
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness
- Sensitivity to light or noise



- Balance problems
- Feeling tired or having no energy

Emotional and Mood

- Easily upset or angered
- Sad
- Nervous or anxious
- More emotional

Sleep

- Sleeping more than usual
- Sleeping less than usual
- Having a hard time falling asleep

Continue to monitor and record information

Signs and symptoms can be delayed for several hours or even days following a concussion incident. Problems caused by a head injury can get worse later that day or night. Your athlete should not be left alone in the first 24 hours.

If your athlete's symptoms are getting worse or they develop new symptoms seek medical attention as soon as possible.

The first night

An athlete with a concussion should not be left on their own during the first night.

Throughout the night they should be checked regularly – but not woken. A parent/spouse should sleep in the same room as the athlete and check on them every two hours. Only wake the athlete if you have concerns about their breathing, colour, or how they are sleeping. If they are slow to wake or show any of the Red Flag Symptoms call 911.

If they are sleeping normally then let them sleep. Sleep is an important part of the recovery process.

You know your athlete best. If they are showing any unusual behaviour seek medical attention.