



## **Concussion Management Policy**

*Adapted from Hockey Canada*

The Ontario Ball Hockey Federation (OBHF) recognizes the potential danger and long-term health consequences of concussions and that they are an often difficult to diagnose form of traumatic brain injury.

The Ontario Ball Hockey Federation (OBHF) believes that the safety and health of players is of paramount importance.

When an individual has suffered a suspected concussion, the following steps must be taken:

- Any player who suffers a suspected concussion must stop participation in the ball hockey activity immediately. If there is doubt as to whether a concussion has occurred, it is to be assumed that it has and that the player's parent guardian be encouraged to have the injury properly diagnosed by a medical doctor as soon as possible. A ball hockey activity is defined as any on floor function involving physical activity.
- Team officials should recommend to the individual or in the case of minors, the individual's parent or guardian, that they seek medical attention immediately.
- When a player is diagnosed by a medical doctor as having a concussion, the individual must stop participation in all ball hockey activities immediately.
- The player is not permitted to return to any ball hockey activity until written permission is given by a medical doctor.
- A copy of such documentation **MUST** be submitted to the league President prior to the participants return to any hockey activity.

The OBHF and all their member leagues encourage the prevention of concussions through mandatory yearly certification clinics for all OBHF officials with special attention being paid to:

- Zero tolerance for violence and fighting in the game.
- Zero tolerance for head checking and hitting from behind.
- Mandatory wearing of helmets in all age levels and strong enforcement of chin straps and the wearing of CSA certified helmets.

### Rationale and Recommendation for this Policy

- To encourage greater overall awareness and responsibility regarding the importance of safety of all players, especially as it relates to head injuries.
- To reduce the potential for litigation resulting from a concussed player being permitted to return to participation without proper clearance by a medical doctor.
- To place a greater degree of responsibility on the parent/guardian to ensure that the players health is of paramount importance.

### **Recommended Return to Play Framework**

The return to play process is gradual, and begins after a doctor has given the player clearance to return to activity. Doctor's clearance must be submitted to the league President.

Step 1: No activity, only complete rest. Proceed to step 2 only when symptoms are gone.

Step 2: Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling. Monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting.

Step 3: Sport specific activities and training (e.g. running).

Step 4: Drills without any body contact. May add light resistance training and progress to heavier weights. The time needed to progress from non-contact to contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and the player. Go to step 5 after medical clearance (reassessment and note to be submitted to the league President).

Step 5: Begin drills with body contact (scrimmages, one on one drills, etc.).

Step 6: Game play.

Each step should take at least one day

If symptoms or signs return, the player should return to the previous step, and be re-evaluated by a physician.

Further information regarding concussions in hockey, their presentation, management, and prevention can be found on the Hockey Canada website at [www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/Hockey-Programs/Safety/Concussions.aspx](http://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/Hockey-Programs/Safety/Concussions.aspx). There are new downloadable apps for coaches and players that are extremely helpful for understanding concussions and managing return to play. All OBHF members are encouraged to download these on their phones.

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