



Utah High School Activities Association

Implementation of NFHS Playing Rules Related to Concussion and Concussed Athletes

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In its various sports playing rules, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) has implemented a standard rule in all sports dealing with suspected concussions in student athletes. The basic rule in all sports (the rule may be worded slightly differently in each to reflect the language of the sport) states:

Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. (Please see NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in the Appendix of each NFHS Rules Book)

The responsibility for observing signs, symptoms, and behaviors that are consistent with a concussion rests with school personnel and sports officials. In conjunction with the *UHSAA Concussion Management Plan* <http://uhsaa.org/SportsMed/ConcussionManagementPlan.pdf> and the rule stated above the following guidelines are given:

Role of the contest official in administering the rule:

- Officials are to review and know the signs, symptoms and behaviors consistent with a concussion.
- Officials are to direct the removal an athlete who demonstrates signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with concussion from the contest according the rules and protocol regarding injured contestants for the specific sport.
- Officials have no other role in the process. The official does not need to receive clearance for an athlete to re-enter the contest.

Role of school personnel in administering the rule:

- All coaches, athletic trainers, and administrative personnel are required to complete a course dealing with concussion prior to working with student/athletes. The NFHS course *Concussion in Sport* available free of charge at www.nfhslearn.com satisfies this requirement.
- All coaches and athletic trainers are required to annually review the *UHSAA Concussion Management Plan* <http://uhsaa.org/SportsMed/ConcussionManagementPlan.pdf> and the CDC publication *Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports – A Guide for Coaches* available at http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/high_school.html.
- A student athlete who has demonstrated signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with concussion shall be removed immediately from the contest or practice and shall not return to play or practice until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. The student/athlete and their parent/guardian shall be provided with the “*UHSAA Post Concussion Instructions and Return to Play Clearance Form*”. <http://uhsaa.org/new/images/forms/ConcussionReleaseForm.pdf>

Appropriate health-care professional:

- An appropriate health-care professional is one who is trained in the management of concussion and who:
 - is licensed under Utah Code, Title 58, Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing Act; and
 - may evaluate and manage a concussion within the health care provider’s scope of practice; and
 - has, within three years, successfully completed a continuing education course in the evaluation and management of concussion.
- The UHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee has developed a form for the school to receive written clearance from an appropriate health-care professional for return to play of a concussed student athlete. The form is available on the “Forms” page and the “Sports Medicine” page of the UHSAA web-site or directly at <http://uhsaa.org/new/images/forms/ConcussionReleaseForm.pdf>.

Links to resources:

- UHSAA Concussion Management Plan: <http://uhsaa.org/SportsMed/ConcussionManagementPlan.pdf>
- NFHS “Concussion in Sports” course: www.nfhslearn.com
- Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) concussion materials: www.cdc.gov/concussion
- UHSAA “Post Concussion Instructions and Return to Play Clearance Form”:
<http://uhsaa.org/new/images/forms/ConcussionReleaseForm.pdf>