

Soccer Association of Columbia's Concussion Policy

The following policy will be adopted by all members within the Soccer Association of Columbia/Howard County (SAC/HC). All members will be subject to the rules and guidelines provided.

A concussion is a brain injury that is caused by a blow to the head or body that may result in improper brain functioning. A concussion can range from mild to very severe and manifests itself differently in each individual.¹

Education about Concussions

SAC/HC is dedicated to educating its members on how to recognize signs and symptoms of concussions, along with the protocol in dealing with this injury. SAC/HC will host at least one concussion seminar a year for its members in which they can attend to learn more about concussions. We will continue to provide members with up to date information about concussion protocol, signs and symptoms, and recovery via the SAC webpage.

Signs and Symptoms for Concussions

Signs and Symptoms of Concussions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Ringing in Ears
- Disorientation
- Balance Problems
- Difficulty Concentrating/Remembering
- Personality Changes
- Vision Changes
- Amnesia
- Sensitivity to light
- Loss of Consciousness
- Slow reaction time
- Slurred Speech
- Neck Pain
- Fogginess

Protocol for Concussions

SAC/HC Concussion Protocol (based on US Youth Soccer Protocol)

1. Did a Concussion Occur?

- Evaluate the player for Signs and Symptoms located above.

2. Is Emergency Treatment needed? If so contact an Ambulance for transport.

- This would include the following symptoms:

1. Spine and Neck injury
2. Behavior patterns change
3. Loss of Consciousness (Any changes in level of consciousness or loss of consciousness)

3. If a possible Concussion has occurred, but no emergency treatment is needed, what should now be done?

- If any of the above symptoms have occurred, player may not re-enter the game.

- Focus on these areas every 5-10 minutes for the next 1-2 hours:

1. Balance
2. Speech
3. Memory
4. Attention on topics, details

- Player should be evaluated by onsite Certified Athletic Trainer (provided by the Club, not a parent attending the game) or by their Personal Physician as soon as possible.

- Players may not re-enter competition, training or partake in any activities for the next 24 hours, even if symptoms have subsided after 15-20 minutes of initial injury.

- ***The athlete must be evaluated by a licensed healthcare provider and given written clearance by this individual before returning to play. Licensed health care providers include certified athletic trainers licensed in Maryland, a medical doctor (MD), preferably a neurologist or a primary care physician, a doctor of osteopath (DO) or a neuropsychologist PhD.***

All Concussions must be reported by the players' coach to the appropriate administrator immediately upon diagnosis by a certified professional. No player can return to action until cleared for action and that administrator notified.

Return to Play Guidelines after Sustaining a Concussion

A player may not return to play without the players' Physician contacting his coach to notify him the player is cleared to play.

The Athlete will be removed from play until they are no longer experiencing any symptoms from the list above. See chart below which provides soccer specific examples of the return to play progression.

Rehabilitation Stage	Functional Exercise	Objective
1. Light aerobic exercise	Walking or stationary cycling. No resistance training	Increase HR
2. Sport-specific exercise	Running drill, ball handling drills, no head impact activities	Add movement
3. Non-contact training drills	Progression to more complex training drills. May start progressive resistance training.	Exercise and Coordination
4. Full contact practice	Following medical clearance; participate in normal training activities	Restore confidence, assessment of functional skills
5. Return to play	Normal game play	

Each step must take at-least 1 day before moving onto the next step. If at any time the athlete has reoccurring symptoms, he is to cease all training and see his/her physician.

More Information and Resources

[Concussion Video from ESPN](#)

[Fact Sheet for Parents](#)

[Fact Sheet for Players](#)

[Fact Sheet for Coaches](#)

[US Youth Soccer Concussion Protocol](#)

[US Soccer Concussion Article](#)