

MHI Concussion and Head Injury Policy

Head Injury Policy

Hockey Australia has developed a Concussion Policy. This policy applies to the following Australian Hockey Organisations (AHO):

- Hockey Australia
- Member Associations being governed by Hockey NSW. (i.e Maitland Hockey Inc)

Maitland Hockey Inc policy is to read in conjunction with Hockey Australia Concussion Policy Version 1.0 23 Feb 2023 (HA) and Concussion and Brain Health Position Statement AIS Feb 2023 (CBH).

Maitland Hockey Inc has a **Duty of care** for our players and as such we will follow HA Concussion Policy of "If in doubt, sit them out".

1. Maitland Hockey Inc will follow the guidance of **"If in doubt, sit them out"**.

Any force or trauma to the upper body/neck/ shoulder and head area of a player(s) which caused said player(s) to stop play and/or react adversely by falling or holding area of trauma, that player(s) must be removed from the field. It should be noted that concussion can also occur with relatively minor 'knocks'.

2. Where there is any suspicion of concussion, a player must be removed from the field of play and should not be allowed to return, until cleared to do so by a medical practitioner (**'if in doubt, sit them out'**).

What is Concussion?

Concussion is caused by trauma to the brain, which can either be directly by a ball, stick or another player's body part or indirectly (e.g., whiplash injury). When the forces transmitted to the brain are high enough, they can injure or 'stun' the nerves and affect how the brain functions. (HA pg3)

A concussion occurs through a collision with another person or object where biomechanical forces to the head, or anywhere on the body transmit an impulsive force to the head/brain, resulting in transient neurological impairment. It should be noted that concussion can also occur with relatively minor 'knocks'. Concussion is often an evolving injury with symptoms changing over hours or days following the injury. (CBH pg6)

In recreational sport, there may not be trained medical staff present. In this situation, any suspicion by a match official, coach, athletic trainer, first aider, or dedicated observer, should result in the permanent removal of the athlete from the field of play. The athlete is not permitted to return to play that same day, or prior to seeking a medical clearance to return to contact training and/or match play. 'If in doubt, sit them out'. (CBH pg 12)

Parents, coaches, and teachers must be able to recognise symptoms and signs of concussion to improve detection at the recreation level where there is no or limited medical supervision present.

Recognising concussion is critical to ensure appropriate management and prevention of further injury. - The Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5) is recommended to help recognise the signs and symptoms of concussion. (see attached).

The Hockey Australia Concussion Policy has been designed to be a practical resource to ensure that:

- All concussions and suspected concussions in participants at all levels of hockey are appropriately identified and managed.
- All who suffer a concussion receive timely and appropriate care and guidance to return them to everyday activities and sport safely.

WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO? All relevant stakeholders involved in hockey including, players, parents and entourage, coaches, support staff, officials, volunteers and umpires, should know about and meet the requirements of this Policy.

WHY SHOULD A PLAYER WITH A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION BE REMOVED FROM PLAY? The brain needs time to heal following a concussion. A player who continues to play with a concussion has a greater chance of getting another concussion.

HOW DO I RECOGNISE A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION? A player who shows or reports one or more of the following signs and symptoms or simply says they 'just don't feel OK/right' following an impact to the head, face, neck, or body may have a concussion:

- Unsteady on feet, balance problems
- Headache
- Feeling 'dinged' or 'dazed'
- Nausea or feel like vomiting
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Behavioural changes (sadness, irritability, emotional)

If any of these signs or symptoms are observed or reported, the player must be removed from activity and not return until assessed by a medical practitioner.

Difficult Scenarios (but carried out with a DUTY of CARE.)

A PLAYER SAYS THEY ARE FEELING BETTER AFTER SHOWING SIGNS/SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION. CAN THEY RETURN TO PLAY/ACTIVITY? No one other than a medical practitioner can decide that it is OK for someone with a suspected concussion to resume participation on the same day. This includes the player themselves, parents of a child or young person, coaches or officials.

AM I BEING ASKED TO ASSESS PLAYERS FOR CONCUSSION? No. If you observe any visible signs of concussion following an impact to the head, face, neck, or body, or if a nominated representative, coach, team manager or captain raises a concern, stop play. It is the Club's responsibility to ensure the player is removed from the field before recommencing the match.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PLAYER REFUSES TO LEAVE THE FIELD? It is the Club's responsibility to ensure the player is removed from the field before recommencing the match.

St John's:

Initial Treatment for head injury if they are **conscious**.

Sit them down; Give them an ice-pack

Assess the level of response AVPU

A= Ask, is the person alert? Do they respond appropriately to commands questions eg who are you playing?

V= Voice, do they respond to your voice? Can they answer simple questions? Eg Where are you? Who are you playing?

P= Pain, Does the person only respond to pain eg when you pinch their elbow do they open their eyes?

U= Unresponsive. Call 000

If the player can respond normally, then it is probably a minor head INJURY. However, keep monitoring their level of response and breathing. **Watch for any changes.**

If a casualty has sustained an injury while playing sport, do not allow them to return until they have been medically assessed.

Player and Participant Welfare

In considering the management of hockey-related concussion, each AHO is committed to protecting the health and welfare of hockey players and participants at all levels.

Funded by the Australian Government, the Concussion and Brain Health Position Statement 2023 (CBHPS23) aims to:

- provide access to up-to-date evidence-based information on concussion for all Australians.
- provide improved safety and health outcomes for all individuals who suffer concussive injuries while participating in sport.
- assist Australian sporting organisations to align their policy and procedures to the most up-to-date scientific evidence.
- protect the integrity of sport through consistent application of best practice protocols and guidelines
- provide a platform to support the development of a national policy for the management of concussions in Australia. **It should be noted that this position statement operates on a principle of an "an abundance of caution ('If in doubt, sit them out')." Where there is any suspicion of concussion, an athlete should be removed from the field of play and should not be allowed to return, until cleared by a medical practitioner.**

References:

- i. Hockey Australia Concussion Policy; V1 23 Feb 2023
<https://cdn.revolutionise.com.au/cups/hockeyaus/files/mijtis3co9pxhpi.pdf>
- ii. Concussion and Brain Health Position Statement; AIS February 2023
https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1090680/concussion-and-brain-health-position-statement-2023.pdf
- iii. Concussion in Sport Policy; Sports Medicine Australia V1 Jan 2018
<https://sma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Concussion-Policy-2018.pdf>
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=st+john%27s+management+of+head+injuries+in+sport+you+tube&view=detail&mid=416857C1EF5FF360479F416857C1EF5FF360479F&FORM=VIRE>

NB:

As it is difficult for a First Aider to make an accurate assessment of the severity of a head injury, you should always act with caution. Don't disregard any head injury, even if the casualty appears as normal there is a possibility that complications could develop later. Make sure the casualty seeks medical aid and monitor them closely in the minutes, hours, days and even weeks following.

A blow to the head can cause bleeding within the brain, and often the blood can't drain from within the closed space of the skull. This will put pressure on the brain, which is life-threatening.

As a rough guide the more forceful the impact was, the stronger the likelihood of a severe injury. This is particularly relevant if the casualty lost consciousness temporarily.

If a casualty has sustained an injury while playing sport, do not allow them to return until they have been medically assessed.