



Concussion Code of Conduct

Updated 2019

Purpose

This protocol covers the recognition, medical diagnosis and management of suspected concussions that may be sustained during a sailing activity.

Pre-Season Education

Instructors are educated on what a concussion is, the signs and symptoms and what to do if an athlete has sustained a concussion. Resources are available for parents in the form of the "Parachute Concussion Series". Volunteer (sailing school or Quinte Quest) must also be made aware of our protocol. Parents will receive resources via email and must bring the signed form provided by Ontario Sailing.

Head Injury Recognition

Instructors are responsible for recognizing and reporting athletes who may demonstrate symptoms or common visual signs of a concussion. The formal diagnosis of a concussion is to be made following a medical assessment made by a licensed healthcare professional (not the instructor).

A concussion should be suspected:

- In any athlete who sustains a significant impact to the head, face, neck or body and demonstrates ANY of the visual signs of a suspected concussion or reports ANY symptoms of a suspected concussion as detailed in the SCAT5
- If an athlete reports ANY concussion symptoms to one of their peers, parents, coaches, instructors or if anyone witnesses an athlete exhibiting any of the visual signs of a concussion

Emergency medical attention should be pursued if the athlete is demonstrating signs or symptoms of a more severe head/spine injury. The Red Flag symptoms are outlined in SCAT5 (convulsions, worsening headaches, vomiting or neck pain).

Onsite Medical Assessment

An initial assessment must be made by one of the instructors. In cases where an athlete loses consciousness or is suspected of a more severe head/spine injury, Emergency Medical Assessment by an emergency medical professional should take place (see part (a) below). If a more severe injury is not suspected, the athlete should undergo Medical Assessment (see part (b) below)

(a) Emergency Medical Assessment

If an athlete is suspected of sustaining a more severe head/spine injury while sailing, an ambulance should be called immediately to transfer the patient to the nearest hospital for further Medical Assessment.

Coaches, instructors, parents, regatta organizers and officials should not make any effort to remove equipment or move the athlete until an ambulance has arrived. The athlete should not be left alone until the ambulance has arrived. After the emergency medical services staff has completed the Emergency Medical Assessment, the athlete should be transferred to the nearest hospital. In the case of youth (under 18 years of age), the athlete's parents should be contacted immediately to inform them of the athlete's injury. For athletes over 18 years of age, their emergency contact person should be contacted.

(b) Medical Assessment

If an athlete is suspected of sustaining a concussion and there is no concern for a more serious head or spine injury, the athlete should be immediately removed from the activity.

The athlete should be referred for medical assessment by a medical professional and must not return to sailing until receiving medical clearance. Athletes diagnosed or cleared should receive a *Medical Assessment Letter*.

Concussion Management

When an athlete has been diagnosed with a concussion it is their responsibility or the responsibility of their parent/guardian to provide the athlete’s coaches with the *Medical Assessment Letter*. Athletes diagnosed with a concussion should be provided with education about the signs and symptoms of a concussion, the risks of returning to sport without medical clearance and recommendations regarding a gradual return to sport activities. Athletes diagnosed with a concussion are to managed according to their *Return-to-Sport Strategy*. Once this has been completed and are deemed to be clinically reversed from their concussion, their medical professional must issue a *Medical Clearance Letter*.

Sailing-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategy

The following strategy should be used to help coaches and parents to help the athlete make a gradual return to the sport. An initial period of 24-48 hour rest is recommended before starting the Return-to-Sport Strategy. If the athlete experiences new symptoms or worsening symptoms at any stage, they should go back to the previous stage.

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Symptom-limiting activity	Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms	Gradual re-introduction of work/school activities
2	Light aerobic activity	Activities such as walking or stationary cycling Athlete should be supervised by someone able to monitor for symptoms and signs No resistance training or weight lifting Duration and intensity can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day	Increase heart rate
3	Sport-specific exercise	Activities such as light indoor rowing, active yoga, stretching There should be no jarring motions such as high-speed agility training or jumping No head impact activities	Add movement

		<p>Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated</p> <p>No Symptoms? Proceed to stage 4 after 24 hours</p>	
4	Begin drills without body contact/off water	<p>Activities such as boat work, boat rigging and resistance training can begin at this stage</p> <p>May start progressive resistance training</p> <p>Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated</p> <p>No Symptom? Proceed to stage 5 only after medical clearance</p>	Exercise, coordination and increased thinking
5	Return to sport -on water practice	<p>Following medical clearance</p> <p>In the context of sailing, coaches and instructors will allow sailor to return to on water training gradually increasing the challenge of the activity</p> <p>Sailors may return to both training and competition at this stage</p> <p>Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated</p> <p>No Symptom? Proceed to stage 6 after minimum of two on-water training session without symptoms</p>	Begin engagement in training and competition
6	Competition	Return to sport with normal activities in training and competition	Engage in training and competition

Return to Sport

Athletes who have been determined to have not sustained a concussion and those who have been diagnosed with a concussion and have successfully completed their *Sailing-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategy* can be considered for return to full sports activities. The final decision is to be made by their medical professional and the athlete should provide their coaches with a standardized *Medical Clearance Letter*. If the athlete experiences any new concussion-like symptoms while returning to play, they should be instructed to stop playing immediately, notify their parents and coaches and undergo follow-up medical assessment.