



## Abbotsford Soccer Association Concussion Policy

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that can have serious effects on a young, developing brain. While most children and teens with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have concussion symptoms that last for days, weeks, months, or even years.

We recognize that the improper management of concussions can result in potentially permanent or fatal outcomes.

As such, **Abbotsford Soccer Association (ASA)** has partnered with Complete Concussion Management™ (CCMI), a leading concussion research group, which involves a network of clinics across Canada with specialized training and certification in the diagnosis, management, and rehabilitation of concussions.

### Policy

1. All athletes ages 10 and up are **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** to have completed a full comprehensive baseline test through any Complete Concussion Management clinic prior to participation in any practice or game. You can provide proof of completion by presenting your re-test date (found on the *Concussion Tracker* smartphone application) to your coach/trainer..
  - a. Baseline tests are valid for 1 full calendar year. Athletes may be asked to provide proof of completed baseline testing.
  - b. Please contact your local clinic (Pro Motion Physiotherapy - (604) 852-3180 – [www.promotionphysio.com](http://www.promotionphysio.com)) and indicate that you would like to register your team or athlete for baseline testing.
2. All **ASA** Staff Coaches and Team Head Coaches must complete the CCMI Concussion *Sideline Course* and download the accompanying CCMI *Concussion Tracker* Smartphone Application. This can be completed at [www.completeconcussions.com](http://www.completeconcussions.com).
3. If a concussion is suspected, whether occurring as a part of **ASA or otherwise**, the athlete is to be removed immediately from all practices and/or games and not permitted to return until cleared through the *Concussion Tracker* Smartphone Application
  - a. Indication of injury is demarcated by a red icon beside the player's name on the *Concussion Tracker* coach/trainer smartphone app. A green icon beside a player's name indicates that they are cleared for full participation.
  - b. All suspected concussions should be encouraged to either attend the nearest emergency department and/or to make an appointment at the

nearest CCMi clinic as soon as possible to receive a proper diagnosis and help speed the *Return-to-Play* process.

- c. The athlete has provided the coach with a completed ASA Head Injury and Concussion Tracking Form.

#### 4. **ASA Return-to-Play Process:**

Each stage in this process must be completed in conjunction with a certified CCMi practitioner prior to ANY athlete returning to practice or competition. Each stage must be separated by at least 24 hours and the athlete must be completely symptom-free at each stage prior to progressing to the next stage. If symptoms are experienced at any stage, the athlete is to drop back to the previous stage for a period of 24 hours and be symptom-free at that stage prior to attempting the next stage again. Any stage below marked with \*\* indicates that this stage must be completed under the direction of a CCMi certified practitioner. Please book these appointments in advance to ensure that you are seen at the appropriate times.

##### **Stage 1 – Absolute Rest \*\***

Once the athlete has received a diagnosis of concussion from a certified CCMi practitioner the first step is *absolute* rest. During this stage, it is extremely important that the athlete refrain from any activity, which could burn energy (a concussion is an energy deficit within the brain). This means no exercise, no school, no homework, no studying, no video games, no cell phones, no TV. Once the athlete has had at least 24 hours of *SYMPTOM-FREE* rest, they can progress on to stage 2. If the athlete has rested for 3 or more days and is still experiencing symptoms, please book a follow-up appointment with your CCMi practitioner to discuss a potential treatment strategy which could speed your recovery.

##### **Stage 2 – Light ‘Cognitive’ Activity**

“Cognitive” means mental. After the athlete is completely symptom free for a period of 24-hours with no mental stimulation, try incorporating 30-45 minutes (MAX) of light reading, homework, TV viewing etc. If the athlete has no symptoms with the addition of light cognitive activity, they can be permitted to move on to stage 3 the following day. If the athlete starts to feel symptoms with the addition of light cognitive activity, they are to drop back to stage 1 for another 24 hour rest period (Stage 1) before attempting stage 2 again.

### **Stage 3 – Half-Day of School with Modifications**

The athlete is now permitted to attend a half-day of school with modifications. Your CCMI practitioner will provide you with a letter specifically outlining what you can and cannot do. Typical modifications include but are not limited to: No tests, No gym, No homework, No music class, Frequent breaks etc. If the athlete experiences a return of symptoms they are to drop back to stage 2 for 24-hours (and be symptom free) prior to attempting stage 3 again. If the athlete has no return of symptoms with a half-day of school, they are permitted to advance to stage 4 the following day.

### **Stage 4 – Full Day of School with Modifications**

The athlete is now permitted to attend a full day of school. Your CCMI practitioner will once again provide modifications as to what you are, and are not, permitted to do.

### **Stage 5 – Light Physical Activity \*\***

If the athlete had no return of symptoms at stage 4, you are to book a follow-up appointment with your CCMI practitioner to complete stage 4. This stage incorporates the addition of light physical exertion to see how your brain responds to an increased demand for blood flow. You will need to dress in athletic attire and be required to complete 20-30 minutes of clinician supervised physical activity while your heart rate and blood flow are monitored.

### **Stage 6 – Non-Contact Practice – Phase I (Low Intensity)**

Upon successful completion of stage 5, the athlete will be permitted to return to sport specific activity with the team in a NON-CONTACT format. The athlete will be asked to complete various simple “sport-specific” drills that do not involve contact or the chance of contact. These drills will be individually based and will involve fairly low physical stress as well as low heart rates. A list of suggested drills for every sport can be found in the coach/trainer smartphone app by selecting Profile → Team → the athlete in question → select a sport from the dropdown menus. Any increase in symptoms the athlete is to be removed from practice and attempt again at the next practice. Coaches or trainers should submit a progress report through the application at the end of every practice to notify the treating clinician on performance and/or the onset of any symptoms experienced.

### **Stage 7 – Non-Contact Practice – Phase II (Higher Intensity)**

This stage will once again be administered by your coach and/or trainer. The athlete is now permitted to take place in 'dryland' training and weight training. Sport-specific drills can now be conducted at higher intensity and be more *team-based* (3-man weave, breakouts, etc.). At this stage, athletes are still NOT permitted to participate in any drills that involve contact or that have the chance for potential contact.

### **Stage 8 – Chicago Blackhawks Protocol and Re-Testing of Baseline \*\***

This stage must be conducted by a certified CCMI practitioner. The Chicago Blackhawks protocol is an intensive physical exertion protocol that challenges the athlete's cardiovascular system as well as their balance (vestibular system) and assesses their readiness to return to full athletic competition. Upon successful completion of the Blackhawks program, the athlete will immediately undergo full re-testing of all baseline-testing parameters to assess every area of neurological functioning to determine if the athlete has reached full brain recovery. Many athletes reach this stage believing that they are fully recovered because they are no longer experiencing symptoms. Keep in mind that symptoms (how you feel) does not coincide with brain recovery. If you do not successfully complete this stage, do not be discouraged; it simply means that your brain has not fully recovered.

This stage takes approximately 1.5 hours. Please dress in athletic attire, bring water, and be prepared to exercise.

### **Stage 9 – Full Practice**

Upon successful completion of stage 8, your CCMI practitioner will provide you with a signed letter that permits you to return to all athletic competition, including physical contact (if applicable). It is strongly encouraged that you participate in at least 1 practice at full intensity, including contact drills, prior to participating in a game. The intensity of practice is generally less than the intensity of game play and therefore it is encouraged that the athlete complete this step so that they are more prepared for high-intensity game play.

### **Stage 10 – Full Game-Play**

ASA has formed a collaborative partnership with Complete Concussion Management Inc. because they are the leaders in concussion management for amateur sports associations across Canada. All protocols and stages are based on the most current scientific research and this policy has been enacted to help keep your kids safe; reducing the risk of concussion as well as the potentially permanent or fatal outcomes that may arise from improper management of these injuries. Thank you for your cooperation as well as your support in helping to make this sport safer for your children.

Sincerely,

*Ian Knight*

**Ian Knight**  
**Technical Director, ASA Association**