



**IMPLEMENTATION OF NFHS SPORTS PLAYING
RULE FOR CONCUSSIONS**

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) institutes a national playing rule regarding potential head injuries. The rule requires "any player 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."

DEFINITION OF CONCUSSION - A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. An athlete doesn't have to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion. *NOTE: The persons who should be alert for such signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion in an athlete include appropriate healthcare professionals, coaches, officials, parents, teammates, and, if conscious, the athlete himself/herself.*

BEHAVIOR OR SIGNS OBSERVED THAT ARE INDICATIVE OF A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY A PLAYER THAT ARE INDICATIVE OF A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of consciousness • Appears dazed or stunned • Appears confused • Forgets plays • Unsure of game, score, or opponent • Moves clumsily • Answers questions slowly • Shows behavior or personality changes • Can't recall events prior to or after the injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Nausea • Balance problems or dizziness • Double or fuzzy vision • Sensitivity to light or noise • Feeling sluggish • Feeling foggy or groggy • Concentration or memory problems • Confusion

PROTOCOL

This protocol is intended to provide the mechanics to follow during the course of contests/matches/ events when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion. For the purposes of this policy, appropriate health care professionals are defined as: physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers.

POLICY

1. During the pre-game conference of coaches and officials, the official shall remind the head coaches that a school-approved appropriate health care professional will need to clear for return to play any athlete removed from a contest for an apparent head injury, unless that injury is the result of the student-athlete losing consciousness for any period of time. In such a situation, the student-athlete shall be removed from the practice or contest and will not be allowed to return to activity that day and will be subject to the Association's Return to Play policy.
2. The officials will have no role in determining concussion other than the obvious situation where a player is unconscious or apparently unconscious as is provided for under the previous rule. Officials will merely point out to a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise the coach that the player should be examined by the school-approved health care provider.
3. If it is confirmed by the school's approved health care professional that the student did not sustain a concussion, the head coach may so advise the officials during an appropriate stoppage of play and the athlete may re-enter competition pursuant to the contest rules.

4. RETURN TO PLAY POLICY

Background: With the start of the 2010-11 school term, the NFHS implemented a new national playing rule regarding potential head injuries. The rule requires "any player 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 game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional." In applying that rule in Illinois, it has been determined that only certified athletic trainers and physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois can clear an athlete to return to play the day of a contest in which the athlete has been removed from the contest for a possible head injury. In cases when an athlete is not cleared to return to play the same day as he/she is removed from a contest following a possible head injury (i.e., concussion), the athlete shall not return to play or

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practice until the athlete is evaluated by and receives written clearance from a licensed healthcare provider to return to play. For the purposes of this policy, licensed health care providers consist of physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers working in conjunction with physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.

5. Following the contest, a Concussion Special Report must be filed by the contest official(s) with the IESA Office through the Officials Center.
6. In cases where an assigned IESA state finals event medical professional is present, his/her decision to not allow an athlete to return to competition may not be overruled.

MANDATORY CONCUSSION COURSE FOR COACHES

Senate Bill 7 (Public Act 99-245) amends the School Code and will go in to effect for the 2016-2017 school year. The legislation requires ALL interscholastic athletic coaches to take a training course from an authorized provider at least once every 2 years. The IESA makes the IHSA online concussion awareness and education program available to IESA member schools through the IESA Member Center. The program includes information on concussion awareness training, concussion recognition, best practices for avoiding concussions, return to play guidelines, and sub-concussive trauma. The presentation and other supplementary materials included in the presentation should be reviewed by ALL interscholastic athletic coaches prior to taking a required exam over the curriculum.