

Concussion Management Policy

The guidelines below are based on concussion consensus literature, NATA position statements, NCAA concussion guidelines, and physician recommendations for the management of concussions. This policy was created to manage sports related concussion; however we realize that every case is unique and may cause the provider to deviate from the policy to provide optimal care.

What is a Concussion?

Concussions are the most common form of head injury suffered by athletes. Due to the complexity of the injury and ever-growing research, a unanimous definition of “concussion” does not exist. A concussion can be caused by a direct or indirect hit to the head or body and can result in a disturbance and/or impairment in neurologic function. When an athlete sustains a concussion, the brain shifts or shakes and can collide against the skull’s bony surface. A hard hit to the body can result in an acceleration and/or deceleration injury (ex: whiplash) when the brain brushes against bony prominences in the skull.

Symptoms of a concussion may include but are not limited to: headache, nausea/vomiting, difficulty concentrating, cognition and memory dysfunction, dizziness, confusion, balance issues, sensitivity to light or sound, sleep disturbances, or feeling more emotional

Notification of Injury/Symptoms

Concussions are serious medical conditions that must be managed properly. In order to keep a patient from further harm or damage after a concussion it is imperative that the student-athlete communicates all symptoms to ODU Sport Club Athletic Training Services. It is also important for other teammates and coaches to report abnormal behavior and concussive symptoms to the athletic trainers. Concealing symptoms or continued participation could potentially lead to further damage to the brain, and prolonged recovery time.

Case-by-Case Management

It is important to understand that each concussion is different and must be diagnosed and treated on a case-by-case basis. Once a student-athlete has been diagnosed with a concussion they are prohibited from participating in any physical activity. The amount of time prohibited from play is based on the severity and duration of concussive symptoms. Following a concussion, the athlete may experience a multitude of symptoms and it is important to note that some symptoms may appear right away while others may be delayed. After sustaining a concussion, the most important thing that an

athlete must do is engage in relative physical and cognitive rest to give the brain optimal conditions to recover.

IMPACT Testing

Members of all ODU Sport Clubs must complete baseline neurocognitive testing prior to participating in contact practice or club sanctioned competition. If a student-athlete sustains a concussion they must complete IMPACT testing in addition to progressing through the return to play protocol, and medical clearance by a designated healthcare provider at ODU Student Health Services, or a physician of the individual's choice.

Return to Learn

The initial management of a concussion is relative physical and cognitive rest. When a student-athlete presents to ODU Sport Club Athletic Training Services with concussion symptoms that affect their ability to manage academic responsibilities, the following steps will be taken:

1. Notification of supervising physician, Dr. Robert Dunker of Student Health Services, reporting the student-athlete's health status and his/her request for academic accommodation
2. Formal letter written from ODU Sport Club Athletic Training Services on behalf of the student-athlete, documenting his or her current health status and his/her request for academic accommodation
3. Completion of the Request for Extended Absence Notification by student- athlete (<https://www.odu.edu/content/dam/odu/offices/student-ombudperson-leadership/docs/sos-extended-absence-notification-revised-04-23-2013.pdf>)

*NOTE: The student-athlete must complete this form regardless of whether or not he/she needs to be physically excused from the classroom.

4. Hand delivery of letter and request form to Denisse Thillet, Director of Student Outreach & Support and member of CARE Team

CARE Team is notified of the student-athlete's case and it is discussed at the CARE Team weekly meeting. The student-athlete's professors are contacted directly by CARE Team and informed that the individual may need accommodations in order to maintain their personal health and manage academic responsibilities. CARE Team will work with the student- athlete and faculty members to identify appropriate accommodations.

There is no specific return to learn stepwise progression, as each concussion is treated on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with the supervising physician and CARE Team. The student-athlete will continue to report to ODU Sport Club Athletic Training Services to monitor symptoms using the graded symptom checklist and enter the return to play progression as tolerated. Upon final medical clearance, the student-athlete should be seen preferably by the supervising physician, or another approved Student Health Services provider that is familiar with his/her case.

For more information about ODU Cares:

<https://www.odu.edu/success/resources/odu-cares#tab12=1>

Return to Play

The initial management of a concussion is relative physical and cognitive rest. Once a concussed student-athlete is symptom-free, the student-athlete will complete a 10 minute stationary bike test, with a check-in at 5 minutes. If they complete this test with no recreation of symptoms, the individual will retake the IMPACT test and review the results with ODU Sport Club Athletic Training Services. The return-to-play progression may be initiated, as follows in this stepwise progression:

Table 1

Graduated return-to-sport (RTS) strategy

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Symptom-limited activity	Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms	Gradual reintroduction of work/school activities
2	Light aerobic exercise	Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace. No resistance training	Increase heart rate
3	Sport-specific exercise	Running or skating drills. No head impact activities	Add movement
4	Non-contact training drills	Harder training drills, eg, passing drills. May start progressive resistance training	Exercise, coordination and increased thinking
5	Full contact practice	Following medical clearance, participate in normal training activities	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff
6	Return to sport	Normal game play	

If at any point the student-athlete becomes symptomatic, or scores on clinical/cognitive measures decline, he/she should be returned to the previous level of activity in the progression. Athletes diagnosed with a concussion must not return to full participation until cleared by ODU Sport Club Athletic Training Services and either a designated healthcare provider at ODU Student Health Services or a physician of the patient's

choice. A graded symptoms checklist is completed until the patient is cleared for participation. These checklists in addition to treatment notes completed by ODU Sport Club Athletic Training Services and the IMPACT test results must accompany the student-athlete to their appointment in order to be cleared to participate fully.

References:

1. Boston University Club Sports Athletic Training Services Policies and Procedures Manual – 2014-2015
2. McCrory P, Meeuwisse W, Dvorak J, *et al.* Consensus statement on concussion in sport—the 5th international conference on concussion in sport held in Berlin, October 2016. *Br J Sports Med*
3. NCAA Concussion Guidelines: <http://www.ncaa.org/health-and-safety/concussion-guidelines>