



# INTERNATIONAL ICE HOCKEY FEDERATION

## CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

### **Introduction**

The IIHF concussion protocol has been updated using data and research from recent symposia to ensure the safety and health of the players competing in the IIHF Championship Program, IIHF Club Competitions and Olympic Winter Games competitions.

### **Acute Evaluation/Management**

Concussion symptoms may occur quickly after a blow to the head or body, or may evolve over time (hours or days). Consequently, players diagnosed with a concussion, and those who are suspected of having a concussion, should be monitored and evaluated over time.

Any player (including goaltenders) who displays one or more of the concussion signs outlined below, or who exhibits/reports one or more of the concussion symptoms outlined below, either on the ice or at any subsequent time after direct or indirect contact, shall be removed as soon as possible from the playing environment by the team medical personnel. Team personnel observing the signs and symptoms below shall report their observations to their medical staff. The IIHF Medical Supervisor is entitled to request a medical examination in the dressing room from the team if he observes visible signs of Concussion.

Players suspected of having a concussion or who exhibit one or more of the concussion signs or report one or more of the concussion symptoms listed below shall be evaluated by a Team Physician (and Athletic Trainer/Therapist when reasonably possible) in a distraction-free environment. In all circumstances, the Team Physician shall assess the player in person and be solely responsible for determining whether the player is diagnosed as having a concussion. If no Team Physician is available, the Event Chief Medical Officer (ECMO) shall take over that role.

### **Concussion Signs (Visible)**

- Any loss of consciousness;
- Motor incoordination/balance problems (stumbles, “rubber legs”, trips/falls, slow/labored skating);
- Disorientation (e.g., unsure of where he is on the ice or location of player bench);

### Concussion Symptoms (Player reported)

- Headache;
- Dizziness;
- Balance or coordination difficulties;
- Nausea;
- Amnesia for the circumstances surrounding the injury (i.e., retrograde/anterograde amnesia);
- Cognitive slowness;
- Light/sound sensitivity;
- Disorientation;
- Visual disturbance;
- Tinnitus.

*Please note that the signs and symptoms of concussion listed above, although frequently observed or reported, are not an exhaustive list.*

### Return to Play

If, after the evaluation noted above the Team Physician determines that the **player is not diagnosed with a concussion**, the player may return to play.

A player with a suspected concussion shall not return to play and will be reevaluated on the next day.

A player with a diagnosed concussion **shall be immediately removed from play**.

After a brief period of rest (24 to 48 hours after injury), patients can be encouraged to become gradually and progressively more active as long as these activities do not bring-on or worsen their symptoms.

There should be at least 24 hours (or longer) for each step of the progression that follows. If any symptoms worsen during exercise, the athlete should go back to the previous step.

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Aim</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Goal of each step</u>
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. The player 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 Play	Normal game play.	

**The athlete may return to play when the Team Physician or ECMO/Host Physician (if no Team Physician present) verifies normal neurocognitive function and successful completion of the graduated return to play strategy.**

The Team Physician may consult with the IIHF Medical Supervisor, if present, but the Team Physician will make the final decision on return to play. **If the IIHF Medical Supervisor does not agree with the decision of the Team Physician, he will communicate with the Directorate Chairman.**