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Skate Canada - Central Ontario Concussion Policy

Skate Canada - Central Ontario has developed a standardized best practice Concussion Policy for the sport of figure skating in Ontario. This policy is not age dependent, all skaters, coaches, officials, and volunteers must be treated in the same manner.

Though concussions are common sport injuries, particularly among children and adolescents, their sometimes subtle symptoms may go unnoticed. Without identification and proper management, a concussion can result in permanent or severe brain damage.

Definition:

A concussion:

- is a brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g., headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g., difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioral (e.g., depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g., drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep);
- may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull;
- can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness)
- cannot normally be seen on X-rays, standard CT scans or MRIs. (2)
- can result in symptoms that are evident immediately, or may evolve and persist over the course of hours, days or even months

Initial Response to Suspected Concussion Trauma: Removal from Play

An individual responsible for those who are participating in organized physical activity who believes that, following a blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head, a participant in the activity may have suffered a concussion needs to take immediate action.

- If the participant **is unconscious** as a result of a trauma occurred during a skating activity:
  - Dial 911.
  - Do not move the participant.
  - Wait for paramedics to arrive.

- If the participant **is conscious** after the trauma:

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- the participant must be **immediately removed** from the practice (on or off the ice), training, competition, camp, or clinic, and immediate medical assessment received either on or off site.
- The participant should not be left alone
- Symptoms should be documented and may include:
    - Dizziness
    - Headaches
    - Nausea
    - Neck pain
    - Sensitivity to light and noise
    - Impaired balance and vision
    - Difficulty concentrating or remembering
    - General confusion
    - Depression or irritability; and
    - Drowsiness or difficulty falling asleep.

- Coaches are never to make the concussion determination in the field on their own.
- If there is doubt as to whether a concussion has occurred, it is to be assumed that it has occurred
- The participants parent/guardians will be contacted and they will be required to have the injury properly assessed at a hospital or medical clinic

Return to Play after a Suspected Concussion

A participant must undergo medical evaluation for diagnosis and guidance to determine the extent of the individual's injury by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, preferably one who is trained in concussion management.

- If concussion **IS NOT** diagnosed, the participant may return to the sport.

- If a concussion **IS** diagnosed, the participant is ***not*** allowed to skate until the individual has completed **the 6 STEPS TO RETURN TO PLAY** and receives **written medical clearance to return to programming (on or off ice).**
- Return to play guidelines are clearly stated in "Parachute, Preventing Injuries and Saving Lives" www.parachutecanada.org.
- Skate Canada - Central Ontario supports "Parachute" and "Think First Canada" and the training protocols for coaches, volunteers, athletes and parents to educate them on Concussion awareness.

Guidelines to Return to Figure Skating after a Concussion Diagnosis

Suggested guidelines have been adapted to be sport relatable (following the example of other skating federations).

Example of Steps – *Each step must take a minimum of one day*.

- **Step 1:** No activity, complete rest. Once back to normal and cleared by a doctor, go to Step 2.
- **Step 2**: Light exercise such as walking or stationary cycling for 10-15 minutes.
- **Step 3**: Sport specific aerobic activity- skating for 20-30 minutes. No jarring motions.
- **Step 4:** Sport specific activity – No jumping, no spinning - No Contact

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