



KANSAS STATE HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION SPORTS PLAYING RULES RELATED TO CONCUSSIONS

The following language will appear in all National Federation sports rulebooks for the 2010-2011 school year:

“Any athlete 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.”

The National Federation has provided the following explanation regarding the intent of the rule:

“The rules language above, which will appear in all NFHS Rules Books for the 2010-11 school year, reflects a strengthening of rules regarding the safety of athletes suspected of having a concussion, but not a revision in primary responsibilities in these areas. Previous rules required officials to remove any athlete from play who was “unconscious or apparently unconscious.” This revised language reflects an increasing focus on safety, given that the vast majority of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness. However, the revised language does not create a duty that officials are expected to perform a medical diagnosis. The change in this rule simply calls for officials to be cognizant of athletes who display signs, symptoms or behaviors of a concussion from the lists below, and remove them from play. At that point, the official’s job is done.”

The KSHSAA offers the following guidelines and recommendations for implementation of the NFHS playing rule related to concussions:

1. Unless it can be conclusively determined that the signs, symptoms or behaviors are not the result of a concussion, the rule applies and the student: (1) must be immediately removed from the contest or practice and (2) may not again participate in practice or competition until cleared by an appropriate health care professional. The student may not be cleared for practice or competition the same day that the concussion consistent sign, symptom or behavior was observed.
2. *What are the “signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion”?* The National Federation rule lists some of the signs, symptoms and behaviors consistent with a concussion. The U.S. Department of Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has published the following lists of signs, symptoms and behaviors that are consistent with a concussion:

SIGNS OBSERVED BY OTHERS	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appears dazed or stunned• Is confused about assignment• Forgets plays• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent• Moves clumsily• Answers questions slowly• Loses consciousness• Shows behavior or personality changes• Cannot recall events prior to hit• Cannot recall events after hit	<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

These lists may not be exhaustive

3. *What is an “appropriate health care professional”?* Under Kansas law, a Medical Doctor (MD) and a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) are licensed to treat a concussion and therefore would be an appropriate health care professional. A Physician’s Assistant (PA) can perform medical procedures which are delegated or established by written protocols with a supervising physician. An Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP) can engage in medical care based upon an agreement for collaborative practice with a physician. Unless the school can determine that a licensed PA or ARNP has been authorized by a physician to issue a return to play clearance, a return to play clearance should only be accepted from a licensed MD or DO.
4. Return to Play Clearance Requirements:
 - A. The clearance must be in writing and signed by the health care professional.
 - B. The clearance may not be issued on the same day the athlete was removed from play.
5. *What should be done after the student is cleared by an appropriate health care professional?* After a clearance has been issued, the student’s actual return to practice and play should follow a graduated protocol. The National Federation has included the following graduated protocol in its Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports:

Medical Clearance RTP Protocol

1. No exertional activity until asymptomatic.
 2. When the athlete appears clear, begin low-impact activity such as walking, stationary bike, etc.
 3. Initiate aerobic activity fundamental to specific sport such as skating or running, and may also begin progressive strength training activities.
 4. Begin Non-contact skill drills specific to sport such as dribbling, fielding, batting, etc.
 5. Full contact in practice setting.
 6. Game play.
 - A. ATHLETE MUST REMAIN ASYMTOMATIC TO PROGRESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.¹
 - B. IF SYMPTOMS RECUR, ATHLETE MUST RETURN TO PREVIOUS LEVEL AND SHOULD BE REEVALUATED BY AN APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL.
 - C. MEDICAL CHECK SHOULD OCCUR BEFORE CONTACT.²
- This is simply a suggested protocol. The appropriate health care professional who issues the clearance may wish to establish a different graduated protocol.**
6. *Parents and students should be provided information regarding concussions prior to participation.* Click [here](#) for a Concussion Information Form that can be provided to help educate students and parents. It is designed so that the student and parent will sign and return the document to the school prior to participation.

¹ It is often suggested that an athlete not be allowed to progress more than one level per day

² Final written clearance from the appropriate healthcare professional should be obtained before the student-athlete engages in any un-restricted or full contact activity