

OKF CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT & RETURN TO PLAY POLICY

1. Position Statement

- 1.1 The Board of Directors of the Ontario Karate Federation are committed to the long term health of our athletes. We will work closely in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to ensure that current and relevant health information is available to our members. Our policies will be in alignment with those of Karate Canada, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, and current research in the field.
- 1.2 A concussion is a serious event, but you can recover fully from such an injury if the brain is given enough time to rest and recuperate. Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, is a step-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution, (Source: Think First – Return to Play Guideline, 2012).
- 1.3 This Policy is not intended to replace the advice of a medical professional and each athlete shall return to play at their own pace, under the supervision and care of a physician.

2. Possible Symptoms (as per Sport Concussion Assessment Tool 2 –SCAT2)

Presence of any of the following signs & symptoms may suggest a concussion:

- Loss of consciousness
- Seizure or convulsion
- Amnesia
- Headache
- “Pressure in head”
- Neck Pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Balance problems
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling slowed down
- Feeling like “in a fog“
- “Don’t feel right”
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Fatigue or low energy
- Confusion
- Drowsiness
- More emotional
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious

3. Protocols

- 3.1 OKF will implement the following measures at all Provincial Karate Grand Prix Championships. These will also be part of the requirements for all OKF sanctioned events.
- 3.2 Promote the motto: “When in doubt, sit them out”. Athletes who are suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury must be removed from play.
- 3.3 Athletic Therapists and/or certified medical professional to be on site to conduct assessments.

- 3.4 An athlete who has been removed from play by a tournament Athletic Therapist and/or certified medical professionals may not return to play for the remainder of the tournament.
- 3.5 During a tournament where a concussion is suspected, appropriate procedures will be adhered to as per this Policy. This may include calling for first aid attendant and protocols should an ambulance be required.
- 3.6 If during a practice, competition, training camp or clinic an athlete sustains a direct or indirect force to the head and subsequently exhibits signs, symptoms (see above for list of possible symptoms) and/or functional changes consistent with a concussion, the athlete should be immediately removed from play and receive immediate medical assessment. Coaches are never to make a determination on their own.
- 3.7 If an underage athlete is suspected to be concussed and a parent/guardian is not present at the event, efforts should be made to contact them to inform them of the situation. This contact can be instigated by the Host Organizer, Tournament Director or athlete's coach/sensei.
- 3.8 Following removal from play, any person suspected to have sustained a concussion is to be assessed by a medical doctor (or emergency physician) to determine the extent of the athlete's injury and to rule out further pathology.
- 3.9 Individuals diagnosed with a concussion should rest until they are symptom-free and should then begin a step-wise symptom-limited program with stages of progression, only after they are without symptoms for a 24-hour period.
- 3.10 Following every event the Host Organizer is required to submit a post-event form that will outline any injuries that occurred. This review will be forwarded to the Medical Committee for tracking of statistics. At the behest of the Medical Committee, they may initiate follow up contact with athletes to ascertain their recovery status.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE IS REQUIRED BEFORE ATHLETE RETURNS TO PLAY

4. Return to Play

As recommended by Think First Canada, there is a six (6) step process to evaluate readiness before an athlete can return to play. The steps are as follows:

Step 1: No activity, only complete rest.

Limit school, work and tasks requiring concentration. Refrain from physical activity until symptoms are gone. Once symptoms are gone, a physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning a step wise return to play process.

Step 2: Light aerobic exercise.

Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. The player should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day.

Symptoms? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.
No symptoms? Proceed to Step 3 the next day.

Step 3: Sport specific activities.

Activities such as stationary passing, dribbling or shooting can begin at step 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high speed stops.

Symptoms? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.
No symptoms? Proceed to Step 4 the next day.

Step 4: Begin drills without body contact.

Symptoms? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

No symptoms? The time needed to progress from non-contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the player. Proceed to Step 5 only after medical clearance.

Step 5: Begin drills with body contact.

Symptoms? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

No symptoms? Proceed to Step 6 the next day.

Step 6: Game play

5. Initiatives

- 5.1 As concussion research and information is improving, the OKF intends to offer training seminars for all levels of coaches and officials within the province concerning concussion management protocols. These will focus on the recognition and awareness of concussions, along with appropriate return to play guidelines. This initiative may become a requirement for specific levels of certification. At no time will this education replace the requirement of appropriate medical assessment and advice.

6. Resources for further information regarding Concussion and Return to Play

- For information on concussion prevention, identification, management and treatment, visit the Ministry's Concussion Program webpage.
<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/concussions/>
- The Holland Bloorview Concussion Centre's Concussion Handbook.
<http://www.hollandbloorview.ca/concussionhandbook>
- For more information regarding Return to Play:
<http://www.coach.ca/files/returntoplayguidelines.pdf>

7. Review

- 7.1 This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and may be amended, deleted or replaced by a resolution of the Board