



## OKD Soccer Club – Concussion Policies and Protocols

OKD Soccer Club is committed to maintaining a safe environment where the well-being of all participants is a top priority. These policies aim to prevent and minimize concussions in all soccer activities.

This includes:

- Athlete, parent/guardian, coach, and team trainer Codes of Conduct
- Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport protocols
- Additional safety measures in accordance with Canada Soccer Guide to Safety

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### Codes of Conduct

#### 1. Athletes and Parents/Guardians of Athletes Under 18

I will:

- Wear proper equipment correctly
- Develop skills and strength to participate safely
- Respect the rules of the sport
- Commit to fair play and respect for all participants
- Maintain zero-tolerance for prohibited, high-risk play
- Accept that violation of zero-tolerance rules leads to mandatory removal
- Follow proper concussion reporting procedures
- Understand that participating with a suspected concussion increases risk of injury

Concussion Awareness:

- A concussion is a brain injury with short- and long-term effects
- Loss of consciousness is not required for a concussion
- Self-report suspected concussion and notify a coach, parent, or trusted adult
- Continuing play with a possible concussion increases risk of more severe symptoms

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#### 2. Coaches and Team Trainers

I will:

- Ensure athletes wear equipment correctly
- Help athletes develop skills and strength
- Respect the rules and ensure athletes do too
- Follow zero-tolerance rules for high-risk play
- Remove athletes with suspected concussion immediately
- Encourage athletes to report symptoms and lead by example
- Support athletes through return-to-sport protocols
- Respect medical guidance from physicians and nurse practitioners

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## Concussion Protocols

### What is a concussion?

- A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on X-rays, CT, or MRI
- It affects thinking and physical function
- Caused by blows to the head, face, neck, or body that jar the brain

### When to suspect a concussion

- Any significant impact with visible or reported symptoms
- Symptoms may appear immediately or delayed (24–48 hours)

### Common Symptoms

- Headache, dizziness, nausea, blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Balance issues, slowed thinking, fatigue
- Emotional changes, sleep disturbances, difficulty learning

### Visual Signs

- Motionless on the field
- Slow to get up, confusion, disorientation
- Blank stare, stumbling, slow movements
- Facial injury or clutching the head

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## Removal-from-Sport Protocol

### If an athlete is suspected of concussion:

1. Remove from play immediately
2. Call emergency services if red flags or emergencies arise
3. Inform parent/guardian if under 18
4. Provide OKD Soccer Club's protocols to athlete/parent
5. Record the incident for documentation

Note: The athlete cannot return until medical assessment and clearance are obtained.

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## Return-to-Sport Protocol

### Athletes may only return to training or competition following these steps:

Step 1: Symptom-limiting activity – daily non-provocative activities (≥24 hours)

Step 2: Light aerobic activity – walking or stationary cycling (≥24 hours)

Step 3: Sport-specific exercises – no contact (≥24 hours)

Step 4: Non-contact training drills – introduce coordination, resistance, and thinking (≥24 hours)

Step 5: Unrestricted training – full contact (≥24 hours)

Step 6: Return to sport – full competition

### Important:

- Progress only if no new or worsening symptoms

- If symptoms worsen, return to previous step
  - Medical clearance from a physician or nurse practitioner is mandatory
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#### Medical and Documentation Requirements

- Share medical advice with the designated person
  - Disclose concussion diagnosis to other sport organizations or schools as needed
  - Maintain records of progression through return-to-sport steps
  - Limit personal information access to those required for protocol enforcement
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#### Summary:

OKD Soccer Club prioritizes safety, awareness, and proper management of concussions. All athletes, parents, coaches, and trainers must understand, follow, and sign off on these protocols before participating.