

PAN SPORT MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

This document is designed to guide those sports that have not yet developed protocols on concussion. The content of this paper represents suggested minimum standards for developing concussion management protocols in those sports with a recognised risk of concussion.

Prevention and awareness

- All sports should publish a risk assessment of the likelihood of concussion occurring in its athletes during performances and training.
- Where there is a risk of concussion for athletes, sports must develop robust concussion management protocols informed by current, published best practice guidelines and recognising the specific nature of the sport.
- Sports should examine ways to reduce the risks of concussions. This should include reviews of safety equipment and sporting regulations.
- Sports must implement a comprehensive education policy on concussion for match/event officials, coaches, doctors and athletes.
- All involved in sport need to be vigilant for athletes suffering a possible concussion. Protecting athletes from concussion is a whole sport responsibility and not just down to medics or referees.

Concussion management protocols

- Where applicable, sports must develop separate guidelines reflecting standards of care at different levels of the game. As a minimum it should define separate protocols for grass roots and elite level participants.
- All protocols should define clear 'red flag' indications for immediate and permanent removal from play of a participant with suspected concussion, recognising symptoms and signs other than simply loss of consciousness.
- Protocols should be clear that any athlete with concussion OR suspected concussion should be removed from play and not return to play that day.
- A clear and substantial break from the field of play is required to assess whether a concussion has occurred or should be suspected.
- Sport specific return to play protocols informed by current, published best practice documents must be defined and adhered to.
- The final decision about athletes returning to play should be made by appropriately qualified medical practitioner or approved healthcare providers with experience in concussion management, ideally independent from the team.
- When video replays are available these should be monitored to help decide whether athletes need to be assessed for concussion.