



# Tantasqua Regional High School Student-Athlete Head Injury Guidelines

## THE “CONCUSSION LAW”

In June of 2010 the legislature of Massachusetts adopted into law Bill S.2469: "An Act relating to safety regulations for school athletic programs". The task of setting regulations for this law fell to the DPH and the result was 105 CMR 201.000, a stringent program for head injury management, specifically concussions. To register a student-athlete for athletic participation at Tantasqua the parent/guardian and student-athlete must sign off that they have read and understood this document as well as other concussion-related documents through our online athletic registration system.

The nurse is responsible for the implementation of the Tantasqua Regional High School’s Sports Concussion policy. The school shall maintain records of completion of annual training for all coaches, athletic directors, school nurses, school physicians, volunteers, students, parents, and marching band directors. These records shall be kept with the school nurse and athletic department. The school nurse will summarize all concussions at the end of the school year and report the statistics on the Dept. of Public Health “Year End Reporting form”.

All coaches, school nurses, marching band directors, school physicians, student-athletes and their parents, and athletic department personnel, as per regulation 105 CMR 201.007, are required to take annual concussion training which can be found at the following link: [www.mass.gov/sportconcussion](http://www.mass.gov/sportconcussion) and click on “Training” button. No athletic department personnel shall be permitted to work with student-athletes unless this annual training has been completed. All coaches, certified athletic trainers, trainers, and athletic department personnel are engaged in preventative concussion means and should prohibit students from engaging in unsafe athletic activities that endanger the health or safety of an athlete per regulations set forth. The nurse is responsible to ensure all concussion policy regulations are followed as well as updated student-athlete physicals. Non-compliance will result in applicable penalties, including possible suspension and/or release from employment. All Tantasqua student-athletes are required to have an annual physical to be eligible to compete in interscholastic athletics. If a student-athlete does not have an updated physical exam (within the past 13 months) that student-athlete is not eligible to compete in practices or games until an updated physical is completed. Also, if the physical exam occurs following a diagnosed concussion, Tantasqua does not take that as a medical clearance from the concussion.

Before every sports season, the Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for Extracurricular Activities (<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/injury/preparticipation-reporting-form.pdf>) must be filled out by the parent/guardian and student and signed by parent/guardian and student-athlete. This report will be reviewed by the nurse, athletic trainer, and coaches to help ensure the safety of our student-athletes. If there is found to be a previous concussion the coaching staff will meet with the nurse and athletic trainer to ensure student-athlete safety. Any student-athlete may be deemed ineligible to play based on head/face/cervical injury history *or if recovering from a concussion.*

Second Impact Syndrome is a potentially lethal condition that can occur when a person sustains a head injury prior to complete healing of a previous brain injury, causing dysregulation of cerebral blood flow with subsequent vascular engorgement.

POST CONCUSSION SYNDROME Lately more subtle long-term effects of severe or repeated concussions are being discovered. Where once it was thought that a “brain bruise” could heal like any other, now is thought to contribute to symptoms for weeks, months, years or a lifetime. Before current research, coaches, teachers or parents could attribute personality changes to the ever changing mindset of a teenager. Now it is credible to charge it to the concussion. Academic drop-offs, persistent fatigue, unresolved migraines, the loss of memory ability are all versions of long term effect from concussion. Symptoms like these that persist for months are grouped together and called Post-Concussion Syndrome (PCS).

PREVENTION Prevention of concussion cannot be achieved through the application of specific equipment. No helmet, band or mouth guard can protect the brain from being sloshed about the skull. Thus only by teaching proper techniques and drills for protecting the head and neck from injury can we reduce the incidence of head injury.

**Tantasqua Regional School District** will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs and other benefits. Please contact the athletic director for more information.

# Tantasqua Regional High School

## Student-Athlete Head Injury Guidelines

According to the CDC, a concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a fall or a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. A concussion can happen even if the athlete has not been knocked out. Keep an athlete with a possible concussion out of play on the same day of the injury and until medically cleared by a health care provider.

**The following are steps to follow if a student is suspected of suffering a head injury:**

### During the school day:

- ◆ Report to the Tantasqua High School Nurse Wendy Thomas
- ◆ Nurse notifies parent/guardian/emergency contact by phone. If suspected concussion Nurse refers student to immediate professional medical care.
- ◆ Nurse gives head injury packet information *to the student and parent which includes CDC Concussion Fact Sheet.*

### During practice or competition:

- ◆ The student is removed immediately from play by coach for suspected head injury. The student is not allowed to return to play until medically cleared—"If in doubt, sit them out." Coach cannot allow student-athlete to return to practice or game on same day with a suspected head injury
- ◆ Coach notifies athletic director, athletic trainer and nurse by text, phone or email immediately after injury *and at latest* the end of next business day in writing).
- ◆ Coach completes a Report of a Head Injury Form (<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/injury/in-season-report-form.pdf>) and turns it into athletic director, athletic trainer and school nurse.
- ◆ Coach and/or athletic trainer notifies parent/guardian/emergency contact by phone or in person (student-athlete will not be allowed to drive home) immediately after practice or game and next business day in writing of suspected concussion. Coach or athletic trainer gives the athlete/parent a *CDC Concussion Fact Sheet.* If suspected concussion Coach refers student to immediate professional medical care.

### Outside of practice or competition:

The parent/guardian fills out a Report of Head Injury Form and notifies:

- ◆ School nurse, athletic trainer, and coach

### Medical Professional Visit:

Student is evaluated by medical professional for head injury within 1-2 days post injury or if necessary immediately after the suspected head injury. Upon follow up visit, overseeing medical professional should complete a medical clearance authorization form and provide academic accommodations and return to play

### Concussion diagnosis positive:

- ◆ Parent/guardian and student notify nurse/trainer/coach with all documentation from physician.
- ◆ School nurse notifies athletic trainer, guidance counselor, teachers, and administration.
- ◆ Teachers implement academic accommodations.
- ◆ Student visits nurse for daily check-in upon arrival to school in morning.
- ◆ Once student-athlete is symptom-free at rest and cleared by physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, neuropsychologist, or licensed athletic trainer who are licensed to give medical clearance, they will report to nurse to take post-injury ImPACT test. Student-athlete may then begin a graduated return to play with physician approval under the direction of the athletic trainer.

### Cleared

Student-athlete can participate with 1) a passing score on the ImPACT test, 2) successful completion of graduated return to play-symptom free at rest, during exertion, and with cognitive activity, and 3) signed Post Sports Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization form (<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/injury/posthead-injury-clearance-form.pdf>) from a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, neuropsychologist, or licensed athletic trainer who is licensed to give medical clearance. All three criteria must be met.

### Concussion Signs and Symptoms

The CDC says that concussion symptoms differ with each person and with each injury, and they may not be noticeable for hours or days. Common symptoms include:

- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Difficulty remembering or paying attention
- ◆ Balance problems or dizziness
- ◆ Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- ◆ Feeling irritable, more emotional, or "down"
- ◆ Nausea or vomiting
- ◆ Bothered by light or noise
- ◆ Double or blurry vision
- ◆ Slowed reaction time
- ◆ Sleep problems
- ◆ Loss of consciousness

Some of these symptoms may appear right away, while others may not be noticed for days or months after the injury.

### Worsening signs and symptoms requiring immediate physician referral include:

- Amnesia lasting longer than 15 minutes
- Deterioration in neurological function
- Decreasing level of consciousness
- Decrease or irregularity of respiration
- Decrease or irregularity in pulse
- Increase in blood pressure
- Unequal, dilated, or unreactive pupils
- Cranial nerve deficits
- Any signs or symptoms of associated injuries, spine or skull fracture, or bleeding
- Mental-status changes: lethargy, difficulty maintaining arousal, confusion, agitation
- Seizure activity
- Vomiting/ worsening headache
- Motor deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
- Sensory deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
- Balance deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
- Cranial nerve deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
- Post-Concussion symptoms worsen
- Athlete is still symptomatic at the end of the game

# What is a graduated return to play?

The student will not return to practice or competition until the student provides medical clearance and authorization by a physician to return to play, passes the ImPACT test and receives final clearance from athletic trainer.

- ◆ Each student who is removed from practice or competition and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion shall have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academic, extracurricular, and athletic activities. The plan will be developed by the student's teachers, the student's guidance counselor, school nurse, certified athletic trainer, neuropsychologist if available or involved parent, members of the building based support and assistance team or individualized education program team as appropriate and in consultation with the physician who is managing the student's recovery and will be responsible for clearing the student to return to academic and extracurricular athletic activities.
- ◆ The written plan will include instructions for students, parents and school personnel, addressing but not be limited to: physical and cognitive rest as appropriate; graduated return to extracurricular athletic activities and classroom studies as appropriate, including accommodations or modifications as needed; estimated time intervals for resumption of activities; frequency of assessments, as appropriate, by the school nurse, school physician, certified athletic trainer, or neuropsychologist if available until full return to classroom and extracurricular athletic activities are authorized. A plan must be in place for communication and coordination between and among school personnel and between the school, parent, and student's primary care provider, the school physician, or the physician who made the diagnosis and who is managing the student's recovery.
- ◆ The student must be completely symptom free at rest and medically cleared in order to begin graduated re-entry to extracurricular and athletic activities.
- ◆ We then utilize a 5 day graduated return to play protocol after medical clearance and passing the ImPACT test:

Day 1 - Rest/No Activity

Day 2 - Light aerobic activity: 5-10 minutes on bike or walking. No weight lifting or hard running.

Day 3 - Moderate Exercise: Jogging, brief running, light weight lifting 20-30 minutes.

Day 4 - Non-Contact Exercises: sprinting running, weight lifting, non-contact sport specific drills.

Day 5 - Full contact exercises in a controlled practice.

Day 6 - Final clearance from MD and signed Post Sports Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form.

\*Athlete must remain asymptomatic through each day before progressing and will reset back to *the previous step* if any symptoms arise from exertional activities.

- ◆ Only the following individuals may authorize a student to return to play: a licensed physician, a licensed certified athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician, a licensed nurse practitioner in consultation with a licensed physician, a physician assistant in consultation with a physician, or a licensed neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's return. All information concerning a student-athletes history of head injury and concussion, recuperation, re-entry plan, and authorization to return to play and academic activities complies with requirements of 105 CMR 201.000 and applicable federal and state law including but not limited to the Massachusetts Student Records Regulation, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99. *All student medical information, according to regulations, is shared on a need to know basis only.*

For more information please contact:

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