



Policy number: FNB-1007

Version: 2

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Title: Concussion and Return to Play Policy

1. GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Football New Brunswick (FNB) is the recognized Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) for Tackle, Flag and Touch Football in the Province of New Brunswick. In an effort to educate all involved with football and to make football more safe, FNB has developed a Concussion and Return to Play Policy for teams, groups and associations to follow.

FNB recognizes the risk of concussions in the sport of football. Over the years, both Football Canada and the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) have assisted in creating information to help educate athletes, coaches and parents about concussions.

The CAC and the National Coaches Certification Program (NCCP) have partnered with ThinkFirst Canada to create policies and usable standards for sport organizations to adopt for their own uses to standardize athlete protection across the country in all sports.

According to the Board of Directors (BoD) of FNB, these policies and standards are to be adopted by FNB and its members. This policy will increase awareness, education and the safety of football in New Brunswick.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. All coaches and administrative staff must be aware of and follow the return to play protocol established by ThinkFirst Canada which is available on the FNB and Football Canada website. FNB is ethically responsible for the safety and liability of its players. Proper protocol shall be followed for every incident of suspected concussions as laid out in the ThinkFirst protocol.
- 2.2. FNB will adopt Football Canada's policy, making it mandatory that all coaches take the Making Headway E-Learning Module and Safe Contact Course.

3. PROCEDURE



3.1. FNB, will be adopting the following guidelines for its provincial programs effective immediately. We encourage all member associations, teams and groups in the province to also adopt these guidelines to continue to protect our athletes.

3.1.1. SCAT 3 or any testing will be done by the FNB Provincial Team therapist and kept in confidence with them.

3.1.2. All parents, athletes and coaches must sign the declaration of understanding at the beginning of the season.

3.1.3. A player shall not return to play following a suspected concussion until the following steps are completed.

3.1.3.1. The Return to Play protocol is followed and completed (see next page)

3.1.3.2. The player has a clearance note from the concussion professional (physiotherapist, athletic therapist, chiropractor etc.) who executed the return to play protocol.

3.1.3.3. The player has a clearance note from a doctor.

3.2. FNB will be adopting Football Canada's policy regarding Safe Contact and Making Headway

3.2.1. All coaches are required to have the free Making Headway E-Learning Module online at <http://safecontact.footballcanada.com/> to coach football.

3.2.2. All coaches are required to take Safe Contact. A new coach will have 1 year to take Safe Contact.

SCAT 3 Concussion Recognition Cards and Return to Play Assessment Tool Cards will be available for coaches to download on the FNB website.

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.

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 skating or throwing can begin at step 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high speed stops or hitting a baseball with a bat.

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.

NEVER RETURN TO PLAY IF YOU STILL HAVE SYMPTOMS!

A player who returns to active play before full recovery from the first concussion is at high risk of sustaining another concussion, with symptoms that may be increased and prolonged.

HOW LONG DOES THIS PROCESS TAKE?

These steps do not correspond to days! It may take many days to progress through one step, especially if the concussion is severe. As soon as symptoms appear, the player should return to rest until symptoms have resolved and wait at least one more day before attempting any activity. The only way to heal a brain is to rest it.

HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT DOCTOR?

When dealing with concussions, it is important to see a doctor who is knowledgeable in concussion management. This might include your physician or someone such as a sports medicine specialist. Your family doctor may be required to submit a referral to see a specialist. Contact the Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine (CASEM) to find a sports medical physician in your area. Visit www.casm-acms.org for more information. You can also refer your doctor to the concussion pages of thinkfirst.ca for more information.

WHO DO THESE GUIDELINES APPLY TO?

These guidelines were developed for children over the age of 10; those younger may require special guidelines, and more conservative treatment and care. Return to Play Guidelines should be at the discretion of the physician.

WHAT IF MY SYMPTOMS RETURN DURING THIS PROCESS?

Sometimes these steps can cause symptoms of a concussion to return. This means that the brain has not yet healed, and needs more rest. If any signs or symptoms return during the Return To Play process, they should stop the activity and rest until symptoms have resolved. The player must be re-evaluated by a physician before trying any activity again. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, not necessarily during the activity!