

CONCUSSION AND HEAD INJURY POLICY

1. Policy Statement

The International Tag Federation prioritises the health and safety of every participant. Since concussions are serious brain injuries, they require careful and cautious management. When there is uncertainty, participants should not continue playing. Anyone suspected of having a concussion will not be allowed to return to play on the same day.

If in doubt, sit them out.

2. Scope

This policy covers every International Tag Federation match, training session, tournament, and approved event, regardless of participation level.

3. What is Concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury that can change the way a person thinks, feels, and acts. Symptoms might show up right away or appear later, and they can affect physical abilities, memory and thinking, emotions and behaviour, as well as sleep. It's important to note that someone can have a concussion even if they don't lose consciousness.

4. Recognising Concussion

The presence of any of the following signs or symptoms after an impact to the head or body should be considered indicative of a potential concussion: headache, confusion, memory impairment, dizziness, balance disturbances, blurred vision, nausea, fatigue, mood alterations, or a sense of mental foginess.

5. Immediate Management

Any player suspected of sustaining a concussion must be promptly withdrawn from play. The referee or Competition Manager holds the authority to ensure the player's removal. Under no circumstances should a player with suspected concussion return to play or participate in training on the same day, regardless of symptom resolution.

6. Red Flags – Call 000

Seek emergency medical attention if a player experiences neck pain, persistent vomiting, a severe or worsening headache, seizures, unconsciousness, changes in behaviour or confusion, limb weakness or tingling, or any loss or doubling of vision.

7. Medical Assessment

A registered healthcare practitioner must assess any player suspected of concussion.

8. Return to Learn / Work

Players are advised to rest for 24 to 48 hours before slowly resuming normal mental activities, with oversight from a healthcare professional.

9. Return to Sport (Graded Return to Play)

A structured, stepwise program for return to play should be implemented under the supervision of healthcare professionals. Essential protocols include at least 14 consecutive symptom-free days prior to resuming training, a minimum interval of 21 days from the concussion incident before participating in competition, a more cautious protocol for individuals under 19 years of age, and the requirement of written medical clearance before a complete return is permitted.

10. Multiple Concussions

If an athlete experiences two concussions within three months, or three concussions within a year, they should follow a stricter return-to-play protocol and might need to be evaluated by a specialist.

11. Concussion Officer (Mandatory for Sanctioned Competitions)

Any body hosting an ITF sanctioned event, including the ITF, is required to designate a Concussion Officer who will document incidents, oversee necessary medical follow-ups, monitor compliance with return-to-play guidelines, and keep parents or guardians informed.

12. Record Keeping

The Concussion Officer must keep records of concussion incidents, medical clearance documentation, and return-to-play dates.

13. Education and Reporting

It is the collective responsibility of all members of the Tag community to identify and report instances of concussion.

14. Policy Review

This policy will undergo regular review to maintain alignment with the Australian Concussion Guidelines.

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