

# Traumatic Brain Injury Protocol

Adopted 8/98, Revised 8/08

*The following is a guideline regarding evaluation, management, and return to activity for athletes with brain injuries. This protocol is a guide by which the athlete, coach, and athletic trainer can follow to determine care and return to activity.*

## Management

### Grade 1 (Mild)

- Remove from competition
- Examine immediately and at 5 minute intervals for the development of mental status abnormalities or post-concussive symptoms at rest and with exertion
- May return to contest if mental status and symptoms resolve within 20 minutes

### Grade 2 (Moderate)

- Remove from competition for the remainder of the day
- Examine on-site frequently for signs of worsening symptoms
- Refer athlete immediately to physician or Emergency Room if symptoms worsen
- Medically trained person (MD, DO, PA, ATC, etc) should re-examine the athlete the following day
- May begin Return to Play Protocol when asymptomatic for return to competition

### Grade 3 (Severe)

- Remove from competition
- Transport the athlete from the field to nearest Emergency department by ambulance if still unconscious, or if worrisome signs are detected. Use cervical spine precautions, if indicated
- A thorough neurological evaluation should be performed immediately by physician
- Neurologic status should be assessed daily until all symptoms have stabilized or resolved
- Brief Loss of Consciousness (seconds) Should have 1 full week of asymptomatic rest followed by at least 1 week of asymptomatic conditioning. After completing conditioning week, may progress into sport-specific step of Return to Play protocol upon MD approval.

Prolonged Loss of Consciousness (minutes) Should have at least 2 weeks of asymptomatic rest followed by 1 week of asymptomatic conditioning. After completing conditioning week, may progress into sport-specific step of Return to Play protocol upon MD approval.

### Multiple Concussions

- Multiple Grade 1 concussions: 1 full week of asymptomatic aerobic exercise, then complete return to play protocol starting with sport-specific step at week 2.
- Multiple Grade 2 concussions: 1 full week asymptomatic, 1 full week of asymptomatic conditioning / aerobic exercise only, Sport specific stage of return to play protocol the following week
- Multiple Grade 3 concussions: May return after at least one asymptomatic month, only with approval by physician based on clinical evaluation.

