

## Overview

AVPFirst Concussion Injury Protocol has been introduced to reduce the risk of concussion brain injury to players involved in AVPFirst events or activities. The protocol also contains guidance to assist players, coaches, & officials in managing concussions. These protocols are not intended to be a medical document.

## Background

"Concussion is a brain injury and is defined as a complex physiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces. Concussion may be caused by either a direct or indirect blow to the head, face, neck or body causing an impulsive force transmitted to the head." Sports Medicine Australia, <http://sma.org.au/resources-advice/concussion/>. All concussions are serious and can lead to death, however in most cases the effects of concussion are temporary and players will recover fully when managed correctly. The effects of concussion on children are different to adults and therefore will require a different management approach.

AVPFirst takes the risk of concussion in the sport very seriously. Players, parents, coaches and officials need to act in the best interest of player safety and AVPFirst aims to ensure that all of its members are aware of how to recognize and safely manage concussion. Policy adheres to the following principles:

1. Recognize and Remove
2. Refer
3. Rest
4. Recover
5. Return

## Protocol Application

1. This protocol applies to all AVPFirst members and all other people or organizations which by agreement or otherwise, are bound to comply with this protocol (including contractors, Board Directors, Regional Network representatives, employees, officials, coaches, administrators, volunteers, program partners and attendees at functions of AVPFirst).
2. This policy applies to behavior and practices occurring during the course of AVPFirst business, activities, competitions and events

## Responsibilities

AVPFirst's role in making this protocol work is to:

1. prepare a protocol statement as part of AVPFirst injury and risk management procedures
2. Utilize the *Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's HEADS UP to Youth Sports* online training system to ensure that everyone in the organization knows:

- what concussion is
- how to recognize the signs
- the procedures for managing concussion

*This will be achieved by:*

- including the completion of the online *HEADS UP to Youth Sports* training as part of our volunteer, coaching and officiating certification programs
- including the completion of the online *HEADS UP to Youth Sports* training as part of the employee orientation/on-boarding process
- distributing this protocol to all program partners
- ensuring all AVPFirst personnel are educated and trained with the protocol
- including a copy of the protocol and links to the online *HEADS UP to Youth Sports* training on the AVPFirst website

The AVPFirst program partners and members roles and contribution is to:

1. Comply with this protocol and ensure information is made available

2. Ensure all significant personnel are familiar with the protocol and required procedures at each AVPFirst related activity.
3. Collaborate with AVPFirst staff to implement best practice
4. Report any areas of concern to AVPFirst within a timely manner

### **Concussion Management Protocol**

1. notifying participants in all AVPFirst activities and/or events that they will be required to comply with this policy
2. promote training in concussion management to all members through the AVPFirst communication networks
3. promote external Concussion Management resources to all members through AVPFirst communication networks
4. ensure that first aid equipment and trained personnel are available at all training and competition sessions
5. maintain and monitor injury forms throughout the year
6. request that all players assessed to have a concussion by a registered medical doctor present return to play clearance prior to future participation

### **Policy Statement**

AVPFirst will take all breaches of the policy seriously and will ensure they are dealt with promptly, sensitively and confidentially. Disciplinary action may be taken against a person who is found in breach of this policy.

### **Concussion Management Procedures Game Day Management**

1. Recognizing the injury

Any one or more of the following can indicate a possible concussion:

- Loss of consciousness
- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Headache, blurred vision, dizziness
- Confused/not aware of plays or events
- Balance problems (unsteadiness)
- Lying motionless on ground/slow to get up o Grabbing or clutching head

Upon identifying any of the above symptoms, medical treatment should be sought immediately. Any player with a suspected concussion must be removed from the game, allowing the player to be properly evaluated. If the player is unconscious they must only be moved (onto a stretcher) by qualified health professionals, who are trained in spinal immobilization techniques. If no qualified health professional is on site, then the player should not be moved until an ambulance arrives

2. Any player who has suffered a concussion must not be allowed to return to play in the same game.

- It is important not to be influenced by the player, coaching staff, trainers, parents or any others suggesting that they return to play. If there is any doubt, sit them out!

3. Refer the player

- All players with concussion or a suspected concussion need a medical assessment by a registered medical doctor.

- If a doctor is not present at the event the player should be sent to a local general practice or local hospital emergency department.

4. Urgent transfer to hospital is required if the player displays any of the following symptoms:

- Loss of consciousness or seizures

- Confusion
  - Deterioration following their injury (eg vomiting, increased headaches or drowsiness)
  - Neck pain or spinal cord symptoms (eg numbness, tingling or weakness)
- If there is any doubt on the player's condition they should be referred to hospital.*