



CONCUSSION CODES OF CONDUCT & PROTOCOLS

Dixie Soccer Club is committed to maintaining an environment in which the safety and well-being of all members is a priority.

This includes the use and enforcement of the following with the intention of avoiding and/or minimizing concussions while playing sport:

- The *Athlete and Parent or Guardian of Athletes Under 18 years of age* and the *Coach and Team Trainer Codes of Conduct*.
- The *Removal-from-Sport* and a *Return-to-Sport Protocol* as well as other measures as laid out in the [Canada Soccer Guide to Safety](#).

CODES OF CONDUCT

The following are the DSC Codes of Conduct required for:

1. Athletes and parents or guardians of athletes under 18 years of age; and
2. Coaches and team trainers.

These codes of conduct must be read, understood, and signed off during the player and volunteer registration process. This is a mandatory requirement of the Rowan's Law legislation.

Athletes and Parents or Guardians of Athletes Under 18 years of age

I will help prevent concussions by:

- Wearing the proper equipment for my sport and wearing it correctly.
- Developing my skills and strength so that I can participate to the best of my ability.
- Respecting the rules of my sport or activity.
- My commitment to fair play and respect for all - (respecting other athletes, coaches, team trainers and officials).
- Committing to zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions
- Acknowledging that mandatory expulsion from competition is the penalty for violating the zero-tolerance policy for prohibited play (that which is considered high risk for causing concussions). In other words, I will be disqualified/expelled from play if I violate the zero-tolerance policy.
- Acknowledging that there are escalating consequences for those who repeatedly violate the Concussion Code of Conduct

I will care for my health and safety by taking concussions seriously, and I understand that:

- A concussion is a brain injury that can have both short- and long-term effects.
- A blow to my head, face, or neck, or a blow to the body that causes the brain to move around inside the skull may cause a concussion.
- I do not need to lose consciousness to have had a concussion.
- I have a commitment to concussion recognition and reporting, including self-reporting of possible concussion and reporting to a designated person when and individual suspects that another individual may have sustained a concussion. * (Meaning: If I think I might have a concussion I should stop participating in further training, practice, or competition immediately, or tell an adult if I think another athlete has a concussion).
- Continuing to participate in further training, practice, or competition with a possible concussion, increases my risk of more severe, longer lasting symptoms, and increases my risk of other injuries.

I will not hide concussion symptoms. I will speak up for myself, and for others:

- I will not hide my symptoms. I will tell a coach, official, team trainer, parent, or another adult I trust if I experience any symptoms of concussion.
- If someone else tells me about concussion symptoms, or I see signs they might have a concussion, I will tell a coach, official, team trainer, parent, or another adult I trust so they can help.
- I understand that if I have a suspected concussion, I will be removed from sport and that I will not be able to return to training, practice, or competition until I undergo a medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner and have been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition.
- I have a commitment to sharing any pertinent information regarding incidents of removal from sport with the athlete's school and any other sport organization with which the athlete has registered* (Meaning: If I am diagnosed with a concussion, I understand that letting all of my other coaches and teachers know about my injury will help them support me while I recover).

I will take the time I need to recover because it is important for my health:

- I understand my commitment to supporting the return-to-sport process* (Meaning: I will have to follow my sport organization's Return-to-Sport Protocol).
- I understand I will have to be medically cleared by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to training, to practice or to competition.
- I will respect my coaches, team trainers, parents, health-care professionals, and medical doctors and nurse practitioners, regarding my health and safety.

Coaches and Team Trainers

I can help prevent concussions through my:

- Efforts to ensure that my athletes wear the proper equipment and wear it correctly.
- Efforts to help my athletes develop their skills and strength so they can participate to the best of their abilities.
- Respect for the rules of my sport or activity and efforts to ensure that my athletes do, too.
- Acknowledgement of mandatory expulsion from competition for violating zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions.

I will care for the health and safety of all participants by taking concussions seriously. I understand that:

- A concussion is a brain injury that can have both short-term and long-term effects.
- A blow to the head, face, or neck, or a blow to the body may cause the brain to move around inside the skull and result in a concussion.
- A person does not need to lose consciousness to have had a concussion.
- An athlete with a suspected concussion should stop participating in training, practice, or competition immediately.
- Continuing to participate in further training, practice or competition with a suspected concussion increases a person's risk of more severe, longer lasting symptoms, and increases their risk of other injuries or even death.

I will create an environment where participants feel safe and comfortable speaking up. I will:

- Encourage athletes not to hide their symptoms, but to tell me, an official, parent or another adult they trust if they experience any symptoms of concussion after an impact.
- Lead by example. I will tell a fellow coach, official, team trainer and seek medical attention by a physician or nurse practitioner if I am experiencing any concussion symptoms.
- Understand and respect that any athlete with a suspected concussion must be removed from sport and not permitted to return until they undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner and have been medically cleared to return to training, practice, or competition.

I will support all participants to take the time they need to recover.

- I understand the athletes will have to be cleared by a physician or nurse practitioner before returning to sport.
- I will respect my fellow coaches, team trainers, parents, physicians and nurse practitioners and any decisions made with regards to the health and safety of my athletes.

CONCUSSION PROTOCOLS

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on x-rays, CT, or MRI scans. It affects the way an athlete thinks and can cause a variety of symptoms.

WHAT CAUSES A CONCUSSION?

Any blow to the head, face, or neck, or somewhere else on the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion. Examples include getting body-checked in hockey or hitting one's head on the floor in gym class.

WHEN SHOULD I SUSPECT A CONCUSSION?

A concussion should be suspected in any athlete who sustains a significant impact to the head, face, neck, or body and reports *ANY* symptoms or demonstrates *ANY* visual signs of a concussion. A concussion should also be suspected if an athlete reports *ANY* concussion symptoms to one of their peers, parents, teachers, or coaches or if anyone witnesses an athlete exhibiting *ANY* of the visual signs of concussion. Some athletes will develop symptoms immediately while others will develop delayed symptoms (beginning 24-48 hours after the injury).

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

A person does not need to be knocked out (lose consciousness) to have had a concussion. Common symptoms include:

- Headaches or head pressure
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Blurred or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Balance problems
- Feeling tired or having no energy
- Not thinking clearly
- Feeling slowed down
- Easily upset or angered
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Feeling more emotional
- Sleeping more or sleeping less
- Having a hard time falling asleep
- Difficulty working on a computer
- Difficulty reading
- Difficulty learning new information

WHAT ARE THE VISUAL SIGNS OF A CONCUSSION?

Visual signs of a concussion may include:

- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Disorientation or confusion or inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Blank or vacant stare
- Balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow labored movements
- Facial injury after head trauma
- Clutching head

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT A CONCUSSION?

Removal-from-Sport Protocol

If any athlete is suspected of sustaining a concussion during sports they should be immediately removed from play. Any athlete who is suspected of having sustained a concussion during sports must not be allowed to return to the same game or practice.

It is important that ALL athletes with a suspected concussion undergo medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, as soon as possible. It is also important that ALL athletes with a suspected concussion receive written medical clearance from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to sport activities.

The following outlines a process for immediate removal of an athlete who is suspected of having sustained a concussion.

Remove the Athlete

Designated person(s) to immediately remove the athlete from further training, practice, or competition if the athlete has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion regardless of whether the concussion or suspected concussion was sustained from an activity associated with the Dixie Soccer Club.

Call 9-1-1 Emergency

Designated person(s) to call 9-1-1 if in their opinion, doing so is necessary (e.g., if there is an emergency and any red flag signs and/or symptoms appear).

Inform

If the athlete is under 18 years of age, Designated person(s) to inform the athlete's parent or guardian about the removal from further training, practice, or competition.

Designated person(s) to advise the athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, that the athlete is required to undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner before the athlete will be permitted to return to training, practice, or competition.

A medical assessment determines whether the athlete has a concussion. An athlete will not be permitted to return to training, practice, or competition until they receive medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner to do so.

Give Protocols

Designated person(s) to provide an athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian with the Dixie Soccer Club's Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport protocols as soon as possible after the athlete has been removed from further training, practice, or competition.

Record the Incident

Create and keep a record of incidences where an athlete is removed from further training, practice, or competition because they are suspected of having sustained a concussion regardless of whether the athlete is later diagnosed with a concussion.

Dixie Soccer Club must limit the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information to that which is reasonably necessary for the purpose of carrying out the Club's protocol, and to limit access to such personal information to only those individuals who require it for the purpose of fulfilling their duties or obligations under the Act. Personal information collected under this protocol shall be retained, disclosed, and disposed of in a secure manner.

Returning to Training, Practice, or Competition

Once removed, the athlete is not permitted to return to training, practice, or competition, except in accordance with the Dixie Soccer Club's Return-to-Sport protocol.

WHEN CAN THE ATHLETE RETURN TO SPORTS?

Return-from-Sport Protocol

The following outlines a return-to-sport process for an athlete who has been removed from training, practice, or competition due to a suspected or diagnosed concussion, regardless of whether or not the concussion was sustained or suspected of having been sustained during a sport activity associated with the Dixie Soccer Club.

Receive Confirmation

Ensure that an athlete who has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion does not return to training, practice, or competition until the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian provides confirmation to the designated person that the athlete:

- a) Has undergone a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner and has not been diagnosed as having a concussion, and
- b) Has been medically cleared to return to training, practice, or competition by the physician or nurse practitioner.

If Diagnosed with Having a Concussion

If an athlete has been diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner as having a concussion the athlete must proceed through the graduated return-to-sport steps.

Graduated Return-to-Sport Steps

It is important to note that typical recovery times vary from person to person, and that some individuals may require more time to progress through the graduated return-to-sport steps.

The graduated return-to-sport steps include the following activities. It is typically recommended that an athlete with concussion rest for 24-48 hours before beginning step 1.

Sport-Specific Return-to-Sport Steps

Step	Activity	Goal of each step	Duration
Step 1: Symptom-limiting activity	Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms	Gradual re-introduction of work/school activities	At least 24 hours
Step 2: Light aerobic activity	Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace for 10-15 minutes No resistance training.	Increase heart rate	At least 24 hours
Step 3: Sport-specific exercise	Individual physical activity such as running. No contact or head impact activities	Add movement	At least 24 hours
Step 4: Non-contact training drills	Harder training drills, i.e., passing. May start progressive resistance training.	Exercise, coordination, and increased thinking.	At least 24 hours
Step 5: Unrestricted training (full contact)	Unrestricted training – with contact where applicable	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff	At least 24 hours Obtain clearance from physician or nurse practitioner before unrestricted training, practice, or competition
Step 6: Return-to-Sport	Unrestricted competition / normal game play		

An athlete is typically ready to progress to the next step when they can do the activities at their current step without new or worsening symptoms. If at any step symptoms get worse, they should stop and return to the previous step before trying again. If symptoms do not improve or if the symptoms continue to worsen, the athlete should return to the physician or nurse practitioner.

Share Medical Advice

An athlete, or the athlete's parent or guardian must share the medical advice or recommendations they receive with the designated person before being permitted to return to training, or competition through the graduated return-to-sport steps, if any.

Disclosing Diagnosis

The designated person must inform the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent, or guardian of the importance of disclosing the diagnosis to any other sport organization the athlete is registered with or school that the athlete attends.

Medical Clearance

The athlete, or the athlete's parent or guardian must provide the designated person a confirmation of medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner before the athlete is permitted to move on to unrestricted training, or competition.

Record Progression

The designated person must create and keep a record of the athlete's progression through the graduated return-to-sport steps until the athlete, or the athlete's parent or guardian, has provided a confirmation of medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner to the designated person.