**Warren County Youth Girls Basketball League (WCYGBL)**

**League Bylaws**

**Revised January 2025**

**Board of Directors**

Adam Sadler - President

Sarah Gwilliam - Vice President

Stephen Irvin - Secretary

Heather Garrity - Treasurer

Timothy Gilliam - Primary Commissioner

Sarah Gwilliam - D1 Commissioner

Heather Garrity - D2 Commissioner

Josh Yoebstl - D3 Commissioner

Cedric Browning - Board Member

I. Constitution of League

A. League Mission Statement:

1. The Warren County Youth Girls Basketball League is a not-for-profit organization founded for the purpose of providing children interested in basketball a chance to play basketball under a properly organized program. All divisions will play by the Kentucky High School Athletic Association’s (KHSAA) rules of play for basketball except where alterations appear in the constitution and by-laws.

B. Purpose of the Program:

1. To provide children interested in basketball a chance to play basketball under a properly organized program.
2. The objectives of this organization will be to extend, promote, develop, supervise, and voluntarily assist the youth in the game of basketball while stressing the importance of integrity, sportsmanship, and fair play.
3. We are currently a non-profit organization, 501 (c) (3).

C. National Affiliation:

1. The WCYGBL will not be associated with any nationally recognized basketball association. The WCYGBL will maintain an affiliation with the Warren County Parks and Recreation (WCPR) and will act in compliance with WCPR rules and regulations in all operations. When there is a conflict with the rules and regulations between the WCPR and WCGYBL, the WCPR rules will prevail.

D. Officers and Board Members:

1. The total number of board members is 7.
2. The minimum number of board members is 3 and the maximum number of board members is 7.
3. There are no term limits for board members.
4. A board member may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the remaining board members for unsatisfactory performance of his or her duties, violation of the League or WCPR code of ethics, or missing three consecutive board meetings.
5. Any board vacancy will be filled by the league president pending majority approval from the league board.
6. Board Member Positions include;
   1. President- The duties of the president will be to...

· preside at all league meetings

· assumes full responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the league

· Receives mail, supplies, and other communications to the league

· Assure that all league personnel are properly trained on all rules, regulations, and policies of the WCYGBL.

· Propose league budget

· Call league meetings, including but not limited to Board meetings, registration, and coaches training.

Sponsorship Coordinator

* 1. Vice-President - The duties of the vice-president shall be to...

· Preside in any and all meetings and league business in the absence of the president

· Is an official member of all committees

· Carries out duties and assignments as assigned by the president

· Organization and coordination of uniform ordering and distribution

· Other duties as assigned by the president

* 1. Secretary - The duties of the secretary shall be to...

· maintain a register of members and directors

· record the minutes of meetings

· communicate meeting time and location to directors and members when appropriate

· maintain a record of league activities

· Other duties as assigned by the president.

* 1. TREASURER - The duties of the treasurer shall be to...

· Monitor the budget

· Dispense league funds approved by the president

· Sign checks

· Reports on the status of league finances to the Board of Directors

· Maintains league books and financial records

· Procure and maintain insurance at the director of the Board of Directors · Other duties as assigned by the president.

* 1. Division Commissioners - There will be one commissioner for each division, Primary, I, II, III, IV, and V. Commissioners for all divisions will be members of the Board of Directors. The duties of the commissioners shall be to...

· Collect all applications for league participation for their prospective division

· Determining team size and number of teams for the division

· Act as a liaison between the Board of Directors and the membership of their prospective division.

· Handle all day-to-day operations of their prospective division, including but not limited to practice schedules, game schedules, coach recruitment and training, and any other league business.

· Responsible for keeping all scores and league standings

· Report to the Board any issues or problems with their prospective division in a timely, objective, and professional manner.

· Other duties as assigned by the president

1. Director at Large (when applicable) - The director at large will serve as a voting member of the Board of Directors and shall fulfill whatever duties are assigned by the president.
2. Chain of Command is as follows: President - Vice President – Commissioners – Coaches

II. Bylaws of League

A. Participants;

1. The league will consist of children who meet the following qualifications...

PRIMARY league - Level 1 – Preschool and Kindergarten children who have not reached 6 years of age before July 1st.

· DIVISION I – 1st and 2nd-grade children who are between the ages of 6 and 8 years of age on July 1st.

· DIVISION II - 3rd and 4th-grade children between the ages of 9 and 10 years of age on July 1st.

· DIVISION III - 5th and 6th grade children who have not reached the age of 13 by July 1st.

· DIVISION IV - 7th and 8th-grade youth who have not reached the age of 15 by July 1st.

· DIVISION V - 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th-grade youth who have not reached the age of 19 by July 1st.

1. Registration and Fees for League;
   * 1. The Board will set registration fees based on the league's financial needs. The registration fees are as follows:

Primary - $40 + $10 County Parks Fee = $50 includes uniform

Division 1 - $70 + $10 County Parks Fee = $80 includes uniform

Division II, III, IV - $90 + $10 County Parks Fee = $100 includes uniform

* + 1. A late fee of $10 will be charged to any participant who registers after the last day of registration.

1. Coaches/ Assistant Coaches
   1. The Basic Responsibilities include;

The duties of the Head coach will be to...

* + 1. Monitor and control the conduct of his players, coaches, and spectators, during all league-sponsored activities.
    2. Deliver a roster and other records to the commissioner of the appropriate division.
    3. Ensure that all players are eligible for play.
    4. Ensure that only the head coach, one (1) assistant, and players are seated on the bench during games.
    5. Ensure that players are in proper uniform before they are permitted to play.
    6. Read and agree to the constitution and by-laws/rules, regulations, and code of ethics of the WCYGBL, and WCPRD before any coaching duties.
  1. The selection and removal policy for coaches and assistant coaches are as follows;

Selection - The Head coach is selected by the Board of Directors, and/or upon recommendation of the Division Commissioner. The assistant coach can be selected by the Head coach but needs to be approved by the Board of Directors.

Each team will have one (1) Head Coach and may have one (1) Assistant Coach.

There are no qualifications needed to be a coach.

You are not guaranteed a coaching position even though you have coached in a previous season, or have been requested by other league participants.

Coaches can be removed by the board for violations of the WCPRD Code of Ethics or league specified bylaw violation.

Every coach must complete a background check with WCPRD.

The league, WCYGB, has the right to impose disciplinary action against any coach or individual who fails to comply with this policy.

The league, WCYGB, has the right to remove any coach or spectator at any time that we feel is necessary.

* 1. The Discipline policies of the league will follow the WCPRD Penalties as outlined in the Code of Ethics.
  2. Any individual participating in an WCYGBL sponsored event (including practice, game, meeting, tournament, etc.) must follow the WCPRD Code of Ethics and will be subject to disciplinary action should they fail to meet those standards.
  3. In the event of a shortage of referees or timekeepers, coaches and/or parents will be allowed to fill in with league approval and completed background checks.

1. Formation of Teams
   * 1. To be considered eligible, a completed registration form must be turned in to the Board during the regular registration period. A medical release form and the registration fee must accompany the registration form.
     2. Any player registering after the regular registration period will be considered a “Late Registrant” and placed in a special pool. Late registrants will be placed on teams at the board's discretion if vacancies exist.
     3. If deemed necessary and not enough participation to form a Div. IV, the Board has the option to place some or all seventh and eighth graders on Div. III teams equally to assure balance in the league.
     4. All girls participating in Division V will be responsible for getting their own team. The coach must be 21 years old or older.
     5. In order to question the eligibility of a player, a coach must file a report in writing to the Board within twenty-four (24) hours after the game in question. The Board will investigate and rule on the matter. All parties will be notified by mailing on the ruling.
     6. Coaches will have to be 21 years of age. No one under 21 years of age can sit on the bench.
     7. Any player found in violation of the eligibility or the above rules will be dismissed and will result in her team forfeiting all games in which a violation(s) occurred. Coaches violating the eligibility rule will be dismissed for the season.
     8. Registration Cutoff: At the beginning of every season there will be a regular registration period, a late registration period and a Registration Cutoff. These dates are established with the overall benefit of the program in mind and adhered to ensure that the season starts and ends on schedule.
     9. Teams will be formed by the school of attendance first. If there are not enough from one school to make a team, every attempt will be made to place players on a team with others from their school. It is expected that all participants are honest in regards to the school they attend.
     10. Coach and/or friend requests are only considered when they do not impact the formation of teams by school.
2. Financials of League
   * 1. The purchasing process of the league will be the responsibility of the treasurer and the president.
     2. The policy regarding the payroll for officials and scorekeepers is as follows;

a. WCPRD provides a list of individuals who have served as officials/scorekeepers

for payment by the league on a bi-weekly schedule.

* + 1. The fiscal year is December-November
    2. The WCYGBL does have a federal tax identification number
    3. All tax information for officials/scorekeepers that are paid by the league will be the responsibility of the league.
    4. The WCYGBL reconciles financial books with the league or board approval accountant.

1. Officials Per Division

1. The Rate of Pay for officials is as follows;

* + - 1. Primary- No officials
      2. Division 1 - $25 per game
      3. Division 2 - $35 per game
      4. Division 3 - $35 per game
      5. Division 4 - $40 per game
    1. Officials are independent contractors of WCYGB and not affiliated with WCPRD.
    2. In the event of an official shortage, the league may assign coaches or parents to perform official responsibilities, provided that they have completed the WCPRD background check.

1. Scorekeepers and Timers

1. The Rate of Pay for scorekeepers/timers is as follows;

a. All scorekeepers/timers receive $12 per game for all divisions.

* + 1. Scorekeepers and timers are independent contractors of WCYGB and not affiliated with WCPRD.
    2. In the event of a scorekeeper or timer shortage, the league may assign coaches or parents provided that they have completed the WCPRD background check.

1. Equipment Policies of the League

1. WCYGBL will provide items to coaches which will depend upon the donations from sponsors. The determination of returning items will be the responsibility of the league President.

a. Primary and Division I, will use the girl's youth size basketball (27.5). Divisions II, III, IV, and V will use the girls’ regulation-size ball (28.5).

* + - 1. Players must be in proper uniform with jerseys tucked into shorts to be eligible to

play. No writing on the uniform. No cutting or tearing of uniforms.

* + - 1. Uniforms shall consist of the following: jerseys, shorts, socks, and tennis shoes. A minimum of a four to six-inch number on the front and six-inch number on the back of the jersey is required. T-Shirts will be provided for Primary 1
      2. The game will be played on a regulation court, with regulation backboards, and goals.
      3. The height of the goal will be as follows:
         1. Primary I = 8 ft. (7ft when possible)
         2. Division I = 8 ft.
         3. Division II = 9 ft.
         4. Division III, IV, V = 10 ft.

1. Rules of Play

1. Rules per division are as follows;

a. Primary- The primary division is an instructional program for girls ages 4-5 years

old for the instruction of the fundamentals of basketball. It will not follow K.H.S.A.A. rules, but is designed for the enjoyment and development of young players. Some of the accommodations are as follows;

* + - * 1. No officials will be provided.
        2. 1 Coach per team will be allowed on the court to provide instruction.
        3. Quarters will be 8 minutes in length
        4. The clock will not stop until the end of each quarter with the exception of time-outs and injuries.
        5. Time-outs will be stopped after 4 minutes of play in each quarter to allow for teams to switch players.
        6. Each player will be required to guard an opponent with the matching armband.
        7. The defensive player may not steal the ball from the ball handler. Passes may be stolen.
        8. The score will not be kept and there is no tournament for this division.

1. League Play - Division I - (1st & 2nd Grade)- The Division I is an instructional program for girls ages 6-7 years old. It will not necessarily follow K.H.S.A.A. rules, but is designed for the enjoyment and development of young players. Some of the accommodations are as follows:
   1. The ball used will be 27.5-inch basketball
   2. The quarters will be eight (8) minutes running time. The clock will not stop until the end of each quarter except for time-outs or injuries.
   3. Time will be stopped after four (4) minutes of play in each quarter to allow for teams to switch players.
   4. Each player will be required to guard the opponent with matching armbands. Exceptions will be during a fast break in the offensive teams’ front court. Match-ups should take place ASAP after all players have arrived in the offensive teams’ front court.
   5. Traveling and Double Dribble violations will be called.
   6. The defensive player may not steal the ball from the ball handler. Passes may be stolen.
   7. The ball handler may be subject to an 8-second count at the discretion of the referee.
   8. The goal will be regulation size and set at 8 feet high.
   9. Score will not be kept.
   10. There will be no end-of-season tournament.
2. League Play - Division II (3rd & 4th Grade)- All Division II teams will abide by K.H.S.A.A. Basketball Rules (latest edition) with the following exceptions:
   1. Quarters will be an eight (8) minute running clock.
   2. The clock will be stopped during normal stoppage instances during the final minute of each quarter and during timeouts.
   3. The free throw line will be at 12 feet. The free throw shooter will be allowed to step/jump over the line after the release of the ball.
   4. Offensive lane violation will be set at 5 seconds.
   5. The goal will be set at 9 feet.
   6. There will be no press until January.
   7. The Board will make the decision on whether there will be an end-of-season tournament.
3. League Play - Division III (5th & 6th Grade)- All Div. III teams will abide by K.H.S.A.A. Basketball rules (latest edition) with the following exceptions;
   1. Quarters will be eight (8) minute running clock
   2. The clock will be stopped during normal stoppage instances during the final minute of each quarter and during timeouts.
   3. The board will make the decision on whether there will be an end-of-season tournament.
4. League Play - Division IV (7th - 8th Grade)- All Div. IV teams will abide by

K.H.S.A.A. Basketball Rules (latest edition) with the following exceptions:

1. Quarters will be six minutes long

2. The Board will determine if there will be an end of the season tournament.

Full Court Press:

Division I teams may not press.

Division II cannot press full court until January and then they can have up to ten (10) point advantage.

Division III, and IV may press full court at any time up to ten (10) point advantage. Division V there is NO press rule. Division V is played by KHSAA Rules & Guidelines.

The officials have the ruling power to decide if contact is incidental or a set planned defense resulting in contact on a dislodged ball on defense initiated loss of possession. Definition of a press: A press is defined as one or more players making a conscious and obvious effort to APPLY PRESSURE on the ball in the backcourt. Two players struggling for a loose ball or making contact with the ball immediately after possession is NOT a press and is NOT an illegal defense. If a player gains possession and then throws the ball to the other team in the backcourt. This is NOT a press. This is a loose ball.

1. The number of players’/roster regulation is as follows;
   1. Rosters will consist of 7-9 players. A roster will only be 10 players if there are no other options and the coach is in agreement.
   2. Official team roster must contain name, address, school, date of birth, age, grade. Players appearing on the official team roster will play for that team the entire season unless otherwise provided by the Board of Directors
   3. No eligible child will be denied the opportunity to participate upon proper

registration. Late registrants will be distributed to teams by the division commissioner as needed and are NOT GUARANTEED a team in their school district or to play at all.

* 1. Individuals registering after the final deadline will be placed on a waiting list and assigned to a team as the needs of the league dictate, but are NOT

GUARANTEED a right to participate if no spot becomes available.

* 1. Eligible children and youth will be grouped as follows for the purpose of team assignment:
  2. The school district of attendance and/or residence.
  3. Private school children will play for the school in the district in which they

reside.

* 1. Children/youth residing outside Warren County or Attending city schools will be placed in school districts as needed to even team schedules. These children will be grouped as a whole when possible.

1. Play time for tournament play will be the same as during the regular season. Tournaments for all applicable divisions will be single elimination.
2. WCYGBL starts with practice starting in November and games starting in December with the end of the season in March.
3. Game times will be formulated and distributed to the WCYGBL by the WCPRD.

Practice and Game Times:

All games will be played according to the dates, times, and locations established by the Board of Directors. This includes regular season, tournament, and all-star games.

Only the WCYGBL League President and the Director of the WCPR may cancel, postpone game(s), and/or alter the game schedule due to school schedule changes, inclement weather, holidays etc.

Half-time will be 5 minutes in all divisions and a ten-minute warm-up period will precede all games.

A tie game at the end of regulation play will result in a 3:00 minute overtime period for Division II, III, IV & V. If still tied, the procedure will be repeated until a winner is determined.

Division II will shoot free throws from 12 feet from the basket.

Division II will be allowed 5 seconds in the lane on offense.

1. Practice times will be formulated and distributed to the WCYGBL by the WCPRD.
2. Mandated play time is as follows;
   1. Players in Primary and Division I must participate in equal playing time. Players in Division II and Division III must participate in two full running quarters (buzzer to buzzer) unless injury, sickness, or fouls prevent them from remaining eligible to play. Information will be kept by the scorekeeper during the game. Players in division IV must participate one full quarter (buzzer to buzzer) unless injury, sickness, or fouls prevent them from remaining eligible to play. There is NO play time required in division V. Failure to play a player, the required time will result in a technical foul on the head coach and correction of the violation if discovered during a game. If the game is completed and the violation is discovered before the lead referee has left the gym, a protest can be made by the head coach. The Board of Directors will review the protest and the game may be forfeited if valid. It is the responsibility of the head coach to see that every player plays the required time if eligible. If deemed necessary by the Board of Directors, the coach may be dismissed from the league activities.
   2. Coaches may restrict a player's playing time for disciplinary reasons, but if play time is to be reduced or suspended due to non-participation in practice, fighting, cursing, injury, sickness, etc., the coach must contact the parent and division commissioner prior to the contest with explanation. Players attending any school activity or function is NOT a reason for any disciplinary action.
   3. A player arriving late (after initial tip) loses his right to participate in games. The coach may use his own discretion toward playing the late individual, but will be held accountable for play time rules based on the number of players present at the opening tip.
   4. Tournament play - Play time for tournament play will be the same as during the regular season.
   5. At the discretion of the referee, any effort to manipulate the play time regulations

by faking an illness, fouling out intentionally, or encouraging another to do so may result in a technical foul assessed to the head coach and/or player and removal of the offending player and/or coach. This removed player may not be replaced.

1. Post-season tournament seeds will be determined based off of the teams’ regular season win/loss record.
2. Every effort will be made to remain on schedule on game days.
3. The criteria for a game being forfeited is as follows; A game forfeiture will occur if...

A team does not arrive at the scheduled game time.

A team in Division II, III, and IV must have at least four eligible players to begin the game. Division V must have five eligible players.

The lead referee in the performance of his/her duties, decides that the behavior of one team (including players, coaches, and spectators) is too disruptive or unsportsmanlike for the contest to maintain its integrity.

In the event of a double forfeit, both teams will be charged with a loss.

A team having a third forfeit will be ineligible for tournament play.

1. Procedure for protesting a game

1. No appeal of any kind can be made during the game.

2. To file a complaint regarding an on-court incident, please follow the complaint process outlined in Addendum 1.

1. Filing a Complaint: To file a complaint regarding any off-court incident, please follow the process outlined in Addendum 1.
2. Awards: Awards shall be determined for each division by the Board of Directors based on the availability of funds.
3. KHSAA (Kentucky High School Athletic Association) Disclaimer / Regarding Rules and Officials:

1. The League acknowledges that they are a separate non-affiliated entity and have no formal affiliation with KHSAA.

2. The league acknowledges that if they state they are using specific rules or employing officials that are KHSAA certified, that this is completely independent of KHSAA and that the league accepts full legal liability for operations of their independent program.

3. The league acknowledges they must have their own rules, regulations, and governing bylaws to cover all operational aspects of their program.

4. If using KHSAA guidelines, leagues must include a statement that they are using these guidelines ,but that they are not affiliated in any way with KHSAA.

5. Officials used by the league are independent contractors and are not necessarily KHSAA certified officials.

Addendum 1

**League Complaint and Appeals Process**

**Purpose**: To provide a fair and transparent process for handling complaints and appeals related to league activities, rules, and decisions.

**1. Filing a Complaint**

* **Who Can File**: Players, parents, coaches, and officials involved in the league.
* **How to File**: Submit a written complaint to wcygbball@gmail.com
* **Timeframe**: Complaints must be submitted within 7 days of the incident.
* **Content Requirements**: The e-mail must include:
  + Name and contact details of the complainant.
  + Detailed description of the issue.
  + Relevant dates, times, and witnesses (if any).
  + Any supporting documentation or evidence.

**2. Initial Review by the Complaint Committee**

* **Composition**: A subset of the board members (e.g., 3-5 members) designated as the *Complaint Committee*.
* **Process**:
  + The committee reviews the complaint within 5 business days.
  + They may interview involved parties or request additional information as needed.
* **Outcome**:
  + Dismissal of the complaint if deemed invalid.
  + Recommendation of actions or resolutions, including warnings, penalties, or no action, as appropriate.
* **Notification**: Complainant is informed of the initial decision in writing.

**3. Appeals Process**

* **Right to Appeal**: If the complainant or other affected parties disagree with the committee's decision, they may appeal.
* **How to Appeal**: Submit an email requesting an *appeal* within 5 days of receiving the initial decision, explaining reasons for the appeal and providing any new evidence.
* **Review by the Board of Directors**:
  + The full board (excluding any members involved in the original review) reviews the appeal.
  + A hearing may be scheduled for the appellant to present their case.
* **Decision Timeline**: The board issues a final decision within 14 days of receiving the appeal.
* **Finality**: The decision of the board is final and binding.

**4. Record-Keeping and Transparency**

* All complaints and appeals, along with their outcomes, are documented and stored confidentially.
* An annual report summarizing the number of complaints, types of issues, and outcomes is prepared and made available to members (without disclosing names).

**Note**: Retaliation against individuals filing complaints or appeals is strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.

Concussion Policy

**What is a concussion?**

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with the normal function of the brain. Simply stated – a concussion results from an injury to the brain, and there is no such thing as a minor brain injury! Concussions should never be referred to as a “ding” or a “bell-ringer.” Any suspected concussion must be taken very seriously.

An athlete does not need to lose consciousness (be “knocked-out”) to suffer a concussion. In fact, less than 5% of concussed athletes suffer a loss of consciousness.

What happens to the brain during a concussion is not completely understood. It is a complex process, primarily affecting the function of the brain. The sudden movement of the brain causes stretching and tearing of brain cells, damaging the cells and creating chemical changes in the brain. Once this injury occurs, the brain is vulnerable to further injury and very sensitive to any increase in stress, such as another head injury, until it fully recovers.

Common sports injuries such as torn ligaments and broken bones are structural injuries that can be seen on x rays or MRI. A concussion, however, is an injury that interferes with how the brain works and cannot be seen on MRI or CT scans. Therefore, even though the brain is injured, the brain looks normal on these tests.

**Recognition and Management**

If an athlete exhibits any signs, symptoms, or behaviors that make you suspicious of a concussion, the athlete must be removed from play and not be allowed to return to play until they are evaluated and cleared by a health-care professional. Failure to remove the athlete from activity puts them at risk for sustaining another 1 head injury while concussed, which can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, increased risk for further injury, and, sometimes even death.

Parents/guardians and coaches are not expected to “diagnose” a concussion. However, everyone involved in athletics must be aware of the signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with a concussion. If you suspect that an athlete may have a concussion, then the athlete must be immediately removed from all physical activity.

**Signs Observed by Coaching Staff**

• Dazed or stunned appearance.

• Confusion about assignment or position.

• Forgetfulness.

• Uncertainty of game, score, or opponent.

• Clumsy movements.

• Slow response to questions.

• Mood, behavior or personality changes.

• Can’t recall events prior to or after hit or fall.

**Symptoms Reported by Athlete**

• Headache or “pressure” in head.

• Nausea.

• Balance problems or dizziness.

• Double or blurry vision.

• Sensitivity to light or noise.

• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy.

• Concentration or memory problems.

• Confusion.

• Emotions of “not feeling right” or “feeling down”.

**When in doubt, sit them out!**

If you suspect that a player has a concussion, follow the “Heads Up” 4-step Action Plan.

1. Remove the athlete from play.

2. Ensure the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.

3. Inform the athlete’s parents/guardians about the possible concussion and give them information on concussion.

4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury, and until an appropriate health-care professional has given written clearance that the athlete is symptom-free and may return to activity.

The signs and symptoms associated with a concussion are not always apparent immediately after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and may develop over a few hours or longer. However, until an athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional, they should be closely watched following a suspected concussion and should not be left alone.

Athletes should never try to “tough out” a concussion. Teammates, parents/guardians, and coaches should never encourage an athlete to “play through” the symptoms of a concussion. In addition, there should never be an attribution of bravery or courage to athletes who play despite having concussion signs and/or symptoms. The risks of such behavior must be emphasized to all members of the team, as well as coaches and parents.

If an athlete returns to activity before being fully healed from an initial concussion, their reaction time and reflexes may be compromised, placing the athlete at greater risk for sustaining another head injury. A second injury that occurs before the brain has a chance to recover from the initial concussion will delay recovery and increase the chance for long-term problems. In rare cases, a repeat head injury can result in severe swelling and bleeding in the brain that can be fatal.

**What Are Some Danger Signs to Look Out For?**

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form between the brain and skull after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. The pressure from this blood can squeeze the brain within the skull. Call 9-1-1 for any athlete that demonstrates any of the following signs or symptoms after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body for transport to the emergency department:

• One pupil is larger than the other.

• Drowsiness or inability to wake up.

• A headache that gets worse and does not go away.

• Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination.

• Repeated vomiting or nausea

• Convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching).

• Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation.

• Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously.

**Management Until Recovery**

**Rest**

The first step in recovering from a concussion is rest. Rest is essential to help the brain heal. Athletes with a concussion need rest from physical and mental activities that require concentration and attention as these activities may worsen symptoms and delay recovery. Exposure to loud noises, bright lights, computers, video games, television and phones (including texting) all may worsen the symptoms of concussion. Athletes typically require 24-48 hours of rest, though some may require a longer period of time.

**Return to Learn**

Following a concussion, many athletes will have difficulty in school. These problems may last from days to weeks and often involve difficulties with short- and long-term memory, concentration, and organization. In many cases, it is best to lessen the student’s class load early on after the injury. This may include staying home from school during the short period of rest (typically no more than 1-2 days) followed by a lighter school schedule for a few days, or longer, if necessary. Decreasing the stress to the brain in the early phase after a concussion may lessen symptoms and shorten the recovery time. Additional academic adjustments may include decreasing homework, allowing extra time for assignments/tests, and taking breaks during class. Such academic adjustments are best made using a team approach collaborating with teachers, counselors, and school nurses.

**Return to Play**

After suffering a concussion, **no athlete should return to play or practice on that same day.**

**An athlete should never be allowed to resume play following a concussion until symptom free and given the approval to resume physical activity by an appropriate health-care professional.**

Once an athlete no longer has signs or symptoms of a concussion **and is cleared to return to activity by an appropriate health-care professional**, they should proceed in a step-wise fashion to allow the brain to readjust to exercise. In most cases, the athlete should progress no more than one step each day, and at times each step may take more than one day. **Below is an example of a return to physical activity program:**

**Progressive Return to Play Protocol**

**Step 1: Back to Regular Activities** (such as school) To enter into the stepwise return to play protocol the athlete should first be back to regular activities (such as school) and has been cleared by their appropriate health-care professional to begin the return to play process. In most all cases, the athlete should have all concussion-related academic adjustments removed prior to beginning the Return to Sports Activity Program

**Step 2: Light Aerobic Activity**

Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase heart rate. This means about 5 to 10 minutes on an exercise bike, brisk walking, or light jogging. No anaerobic activity such as weight lifting should be done at this stage.

**Step 3: Moderate Activity** Continue with activities that increase an athlete’s heart rate while adding movement. This includes running and skating drills.

**Step 4: Non-Contact Training Activity** Add sports specific, more intense, non-contact physical activity, such as such as passing in hockey, dribbling in basketball or soccer, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting routine.

**Step 5: Practice and Full Contact** The athlete may return to practice and full contact (if appropriate for the sport) in a controlled practice setting where the skills can be assessed by the coaches.

**Step 6: Competition** The athlete may return to competition.

**If symptoms of a concussion recur, or if concussion signs and/or behaviors are observed at any time during the return-to-play program, the athlete must discontinue all activity immediately. The athlete may need to be re-evaluated by the appropriate health-care professional or may have to return to the previous step of the return-to-activity program, as pre-determined by the appropriate health-care professional. Summary of Suggested Concussion Management**

**1. No athlete should return to play (RTP) or practice on the same day of a concussion.**

**2. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional.**

**3. Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion should have written clearance from an appropriate health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.**

**4. After medical clearance, RTP should follow a step-wise protocol as outlined above with provisions for delayed RTP based upon return of any signs or symptoms.**

References:

(NFHS, 2019)