



***Australian Rugby League Sports Trainers'
National Accreditation Scheme***

Level 1

Policy Statement – Head Injuries



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AUSTRALIAN RUGBY LEAGUE SPORTS TRAINERS' NATIONAL ACCREDITATION SCHEME – LEVEL 1

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POLICY STATEMENT

HEAD INJURIES

- Any significant head injury that is sustained by a player must be treated as serious until proven otherwise by a doctor.
- Great care is needed in the initial assessment and management, especially if any degree of concussion or a decreased level of consciousness is evident.
- All unconscious players must be managed by the attending Sports Trainer, and an Ambulance called **immediately**.
- The possibility of spinal injury must also be considered with any head injury.
- The player should be referred to a doctor for medical evaluation. The Doctor should have a history or know the players previous health status regarding head injury.

Under no circumstance should the player be allowed to continue playing nor return to play during the same game. This will eliminate any potential second hit syndrome (and potential liability).

- A certificate should also be obtained from the doctor before the player resumes training or playing.
- The initial assessment and management must be carried out by the accredited Sports Trainer in attendance at the game venue following the protocol of the ARL Sports Trainer' scheme. All Leagues need to support the ARL Sports Trainer in these cases.

JOHN O'HALLORAN
NATIONAL SAFETY EDUCATION MANAGER

Rugby League Head Injury Notification

Read carefully

- If a player sustains an injury to the head and does not display the signs and symptoms of concussion immediately, it is advisable to give this Card to the player's parents, relatives or another person who will be with this player for at least 24 hours.
- Name: Age:
sustained a head injury at (venue)
on (date) at (time)

Important Warning: ***The injured player must be taken to a hospital or doctor immediately if he:-*** (tick sign or symptom and give this form to the doctor)

- ◆ Is nauseous (feels sick)
- ◆ Vomits
- ◆ Develops a headache that could increase in severity
- ◆ Becomes restless/irritable or irrational
- ◆ Becomes dizzy, drowsy or cannot be roused
- ◆ Develops visual disturbances (eg. double or blurred vision)
- ◆ Has a fit
- ◆ Becomes confused or disoriented
- ◆ Anything else unusual occurs

If any of the above occur, it is advisable to call an Ambulance.

For 24 hours he should:-

- ◆ Rest quietly
- ◆ Not consume alcohol
- ◆ Not consume stimulants eg. tea, coffee, cola drinks
- ◆ Not consume pain killers eg. aspirin, etc.
- ◆ Not drive a vehicle

He ***should not*** resume training without medical clearance by a doctor.

ARL Accredited Sports Trainer (name)

ARL ID No.:



HEAD INJURY PROFORMA

To: Doctor Date:

Re: Rugby League Player

Dear Doctor,

1. This player sustained a Head Injury whilst playing/training on
2. The nature of the injury was as follows:-
.....
.....
- 3 Player was unconscious. YES/NO (*circle one*) for secs/mins/hrs (*circle one*)
4. Player was taken to Hospital. YES/NO (*circle one*)
5. Player was treated on-scene by a doctor. YES/NO (*circle one*)
6. A Diagnosis has been made. YES/NO (*circle one*) of
.....

In order for the player to return to training and playing Rugby League, a Medical Clearance is required.

Please:

- Undertake a complete Neurological Examination and document this for your records
- Organise any test/s, investigations, referral or treatment which you deem necessary.
- Complete the Declaration below and keep a copy for your records.
- Give this completed Proforma to the player.

DECLARATION OF FITNESS TO RETURN TO RUGBY LEAGUE

(please print)

I have examined (player) on/...../..... and, having taken into account the nature, severity and circumstances of his recent head injury, declare him to be medically fit to return to training for and playing Rugby League as of/...../.....

Signed: Date:

Doctors Name: Provider Number:

Stamp of Medical Practice

What is a concussion?

CONCUSSION – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

What is a concussion?

A concussion is an injury to the brain. A blow to the head usually causes it. Most of the time it doesn't involve a loss of consciousness.

What are the signs of a concussion?

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Ringing ears
- Nausea
- Vision disturbance
- Loss of balance
- Memory loss (amnesia)
- Difficulty concentrating

How is it diagnosed?

The ARL Sports Trainer will not diagnose, but will manage your condition. The doctor will examine you and make a diagnosis and give a prognosis. The doctor will also get information from people who were there when the concussion happened (ARL accredited Sports Trainers Injury Report). This is very important, especially if you are confused or if you lost your memory of the injury. The doctor will test your strength, sensation, balance, reflexes and memory. In more serious cases, your doctor will want to get special x rays of your head, called computed tomographic scans or magnetic resonance images.

Does medicine help?

The treatment for concussion is rest. Always ask your doctor before you take any medicine if you have had a concussion. Sports Trainers' may not advise on medication.

What should I watch out for?

- Stiff neck
- Severe headache
- Repeated vomiting
- Confusion that gets worse
- Difficulty walking, speaking or using your arms
- Convulsions
- Unusual sleepiness

ASK SOMEONE TO CALL THE AMBULANCE

When can I return to sports?

You should never return to play while you have any signs of concussion, like headache or dizziness. If your concussion was very mild, you may be allowed to return to play after 15 or 20 minutes, **only on advice of a doctor**. If you had memory loss or loss of consciousness, you may not be able to return to play for one to two weeks. After a severe concussion, you may not be able to return to play for a month. If this wasn't your first concussion, your return to play may take even longer. **The doctor is the only person who will determine when you are allowed to return to training or playing.**

What are the risks of returning to play too early?

A player returning too early could suffer from "second impact syndrome", which may be fatal. This problem is caused by a loss of the automatic control of blood vessels to the brain. **Never return to a sports activity until you are cleared by a doctor.**

Are there any lasting effects to a concussion?

Most people get better after a concussion without any permanent damage. People have signs of concussion for weeks to months. Repeated concussions could cause permanent damage. After several concussions or less, your doctor may talk with you about changing sports.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **With any form of concussion, whether the player has lost consciousness or not, the possibility of spinal injury must be taken into account and assessed thoroughly.**
- **The misconception that headgear will prevent a concussion occurring is false.**
- **Any form of concussion is serious and must be managed with great care.**

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