

**MHSAA PROTOCOL FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL
FEDERATION SPORTS PLAYING RULES FOR CONCUSSIONS**

“Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.”

The language above, which will appear in all National Federation sports rule books for the 2010-11 school year, reflects a strengthening of rules regarding the safety of athletes suspected of having a concussion. For 2009-10, some sports rules required officials to remove from play any athlete who was “unconscious or apparently unconscious.” This new language reflects an increasing focus on safety, given that the vast majority of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness.

This protocol is intended to provide the mechanics to follow during the course of contests when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion.

- 1) The officials will have no role in determining concussion other than the obvious one where a player is either unconscious or apparently unconscious as is provided for under the current rule. Officials will merely point out to a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise that the player should be examined by a health care provider for an exact determination of the extent of injury.
- 2) If it is confirmed by the school’s designated health care professional that the student did not sustain a concussion, the head coach may so advise the officials during an appropriate stoppage of play and the athlete may reenter competition pursuant to the contest rules.
- 3) Otherwise, if competition continues while the athlete is withheld for an apparent concussion, that athlete may not be returned to competition that day but is subject to the return to play protocol.
 - a) Only an MD or DO may clear the individual to return to competition.
 - b) The clearance must be in writing.
 - c) The clearance may not be on the same date on which the athlete was removed from play.
- 4) Following the contest, an Officials Report shall be filed with a removed player’s school and the MHSAA.
- 5) In cases where an assigned MHSAA tournament physician (MD/DO) is present, his or her decision to not allow an athlete to return to competition may not be overruled.

SANCTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Following are the consequences for not complying with National Federation and MHSAA rules when players are removed from play for exhibiting concussion-like symptoms and are not cleared by the school's designated medical authority to return to that contest:

If a student is returned to competition in a subsequent meet or contest (on the same day* or a subsequent day) without the written authorization of an MD or DO –

That student is considered an ineligible player and any meet or contest in which that student has participated without the proper authorization is forfeited.

In addition, that program is placed on probation through that sport season of the following school year.

For a second offense in that sport during the probationary period – that program is continued on probation through that sport season of the following school year and not permitted to participate in the MHSAA tournament in that sport during the original and extended probationary period.

* Note: This means that a student who is removed from the first game of a multi-game day (e.g., baseball, softball, lacrosse, soccer, volleyball) may not under any circumstances return to a subsequent game that day.