Safety Alert - Concussion

(see https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/early/2017/04/26/bjsports-2017-097508CRT5)

CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL 5©

To help identify concussion in children, adolescents and adults

STEP 1: RED FLAGS — CALL AN AMBULANCE

- Neck pain or tenderness
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs
- Severe or increasing headache
- Seizure or convolution
- Loss of consciousness
- Deteriorating consciousness state
- Vomiting
- Increasingly restless, agitated or combative

Remember:
- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid (danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) should be followed.
- Assessment for a spinal cord injury is critical.
- Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so.
- Do not remove a helmet or any other equipment unless trained to do so safely.

If there are no Red Flags, identification of possible concussion should proceed to the following steps:

STEP 2: OBSERVABLE SIGNS

Visual clues that suggest possible concussion include:
- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Disorientation or confusion, or an inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Blank or vacant look
- Balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow, laboured movements
- Facial injury after head trauma

STEP 3: SYMPTOMS

- Headache
- “Pressure in head”
- Balance problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Fatigue or low energy
- “Don’t feel right”
- More emotional
- More irritable
- Nervous or anxious
- Neck Pain
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Feeling slowed down
- Feeling like “in a fog”

STEP 4: MEMORY ASSESSMENT

(In athletes older than 12 years)

Failure to answer any of these questions (modified appropriately for each sport) correctly may suggest a concussion:
- “What venue are we at today?”
- “Which half is it now?”
- “Who scored last in this game?”
- “What team did you play last week/game?”
- “Did your team win the last game?”

Athletes with suspected concussion should:
- Not be left alone initially (at least for the first 1-2 hours).
- Not drink alcohol.
- Not use recreationally/ prescription drugs.
- Not be sent home by themselves. They need to be with a responsible adult.
- Not drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a healthcare professional.

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ANY ATHLETE WITH A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PRACTICE OR PLAY AND SHOULD NOT RETURN TO ACTIVITY UNTIL ASSESSED MEDICALLY, EVEN IF THE SYMPTOMS RESOLVE

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