



IHSAA PROTOCOL FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS (NFHS) 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. During the 2009-10 school year, some rules codes 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 technicalities to follow during the course of contests when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion.

- 1) The Official’s Role in Recognizing a Concussive Event: If an official observes a player that is exhibiting concussive signs, including appearing dazed, stunned, confused, disoriented, to have memory loss, or the athlete is either unconscious or apparently unconscious, he/she shall notify a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise that the player should be examined by a health care provider.
- 2) If it is confirmed during the contest 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) In the event the contest continues and the **designated health care professional** does NOT clear the athlete for return during said contest the athlete is subject to the return to play protocol as listed below:
 - 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) Regardless of whether the athlete returns to play or not, following the contest, an official’s report shall be filed with a removed player’s school by the contest official that removed the athlete from play due to an apparent concussive event. This report shall be filed with the athletic director of the school and may be found on the IHSAA website at www.ihsaa.org.
- 5) In cases where an assigned IHSAA tournament physician (MD/DO) is present, his or her decision to forbid an athlete to return to competition may not be overruled.

The IHSAA member school’s **designated health care professional** may be one of the following individuals:

- A medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO) that holds an unlimited license to practice medicine in the state of Indiana, or;
- A certified athletic trainer (ATC/L) licensed in the state of Indiana.