

KMFA Concussion Awareness & Protocols Statement

Kelowna Minor Football Association

Purpose: Sport activities are a common source of concussion in youth. While most young players will recover fully from a concussion, those that continue to play while experiencing symptoms or who return to play too quickly following their injury risk longer-term health problems and perhaps even permanent disability or death. It is important to provide coaches, parents, and other interested persons with the knowledge needed to recognize a possible concussion and to respond appropriately in situations involving youth concussion.

Assessment: Concussions can be a very serious condition if not prevented or managed properly. Kelowna Minor Football is taking the stance that every concussion is a serious condition and that we must take the appropriate steps to safeguard against and treat concussions in all our football programs i.e. Winter Indoor Flag, Spring/Fall Flag and Spring/Fall Tackle.

Awareness:

KMFA is partnering with medical and other professionals to assist all coaches and our players and parents in delivering the following for this upcoming season and future seasons.

1. Brain Injury and Concussion information
2. Team based concussion awareness session(s)
3. Team based exercise training to include specifically - neck exercises

As well, we are making available on our website, links to information on concussions.

<http://www.coach.ca/concussion-awareness-s16361>

<http://www.parachutecanada.org/thinkfirstcanada>

Protocols:

For prevention:

1. KMFA is pleased to partner with Coach.ca to provide an online concussion education course for all our member coaches **Making Head Way** Concussion eLearning Series in football. <http://www.coach.ca/-p153487>
2. All member coaches for tackle will register and complete the NCCP Introduction to Competition coaches clinic. This course is typically offered by KMFA to member coaches in late Spring following the Spring Flag program.
3. All member coaches for tackle will register for a Safe Contact clinic through KMFA / BCPFA. It is vitally important that all our coaches be equipped to teach the football fundamentals taught in Safe Contact. Safe Contact teaches safe tackling techniques that emphasizes making contact with the chest and front shoulder and not the head.
http://bcpfa.com/leagues/front_pageesdNew.cfm?clientID=6321&leagueID=27377

Any new coach has a year from the time he or she first steps on the field as a coach i.e. head coach, assistant or position coach, to be Safe Contact trained by completing the above three (3) easy steps.

4. All member coaches for tackle will incorporate into their weekly practice plans an exercise program including neck exercises (either as part of a warm up or preferably an end-of-practice routine)
5. All member coaches for tackle will have a Trainer / First-aid person on their side line with the minimum qualification of **Standard First Aid and CPR** and they will be **certified with a concussion program** or have successfully completed the online concussion education course noted above (coach.ca Making Head Way Concussion eLearning Series in football)
6. All member coaches will ensure at all times i.e. practices and games that **all** players wear a mouth guard - tethered for tackle / un-tethered for flag.
7. All member coaches for tackle will ensure that all players are equipped with helmets that are properly fitted for all children before any contact drills occur.

For Management:

1. In the case of any suspected concussion; all member coaches **will** adopt the "When in doubt, sit them out" policy i.e. remove helmet, shoulder pads and sit the player out for the remainder of the game.
2. All suspected concussed players will be sent to the nearest hospital's Emergency Room (ER), as soon as a concussion is suspected, to be assessed by an ER physician.
3. If a concussion is confirmed, a doctor's note **will** be given to the coach. The coach will contact the KMFA Director of First Aid who will then notify the President.
4. The child must be cleared to return to play and/or practice by a physician and **a doctor's note MUST BE provided by the parents to the coach.** The

return to play notice will also be provided to the KMFA Director of First Aid and the President.

Question and Answer:

Q: What is the big deal about concussions?

A: A concussion is a brain injury. Suffering a subsequent concussion if a player is still recovering from one could result in permanent brain damage and possibly even death. It is progressively easier to suffer from subsequent concussions, and the damage to the brain caused by concussions can be cumulative.

Q: Why is KMFA concerned about concussions?

A: There have been many high profile NHL & NFL players whom have suffered severe and career ending concussions while playing the game in more recent years. KMFA is being proactive to ensure our membership is informed and have the knowledge necessary to help safeguard our players and to ensure those that do suffer a concussion have the information necessary to aid in recovery.

Q: What should I do if I suspect that my child has a concussion?

A: Go see an Emergency Room doctor as soon as possible to get medically assessed and advice on steps to take to recover. It is also a good idea to inform your family physician of the suspected concussion and it is recommended that you contact a specialized local concussion management practice.