**PARENT/ATHLETE CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET**

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. It is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump can be serious. **Signs and symptoms of concussion** can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If an athlete reports one or more symptoms of concussion listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, s/he should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says s/he is symptom-free and it’s OK to return to play.

**Concussion Danger Signs:** In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow, or jolt s/he exhibits any of the following danger signs:

* One pupil larger than the other
* Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
* A headache that not only does not diminish, but gets worse
* Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
* Repeated vomiting or nausea
* Loses consciousness (even if brief)
* Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
* Cannot recognize people or places
* Has unusual behavior
* Convulsions or seizures
* Slurred speech

**Why should an athlete report their symptoms?** If an athlete has a concussion, his/her brain needs time to heal. While an athlete’s brain is still healing, s/he is much more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes to recover. In rare cases, repeat concussions in young athletes can result in brain swelling or permanent damage to their brain. They can even be fatal.

**What should you do if you think your athlete has a concussion?** If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, remove the athlete from play and seek medical attention. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says s/he is symptom-free and it is okay to return to play.

**Rest is key** to helping an athlete recover from a concussion. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games, may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. After a concussion, returning to sports and school is a gradual process that should be carefully managed and monitored by a health care professional. It’s better to miss one game than the whole season. For more information on concussions, visit http://cdc.gov/headsup/ as well as the “Concussion Information Sheet” for parents and athletes at http://cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/youthsports/parents\_athlete\_info\_sheet-a.pdf

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| **Signs Observed by Coaching Staff**   * Appears dazed or stunned * Is confused about assignment or position * Forgets an instruction * Is unsure of game, score, or opponent * Moves clumsily or answers questions slowly * Loses consciousness (even briefly) * Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes * Can’t recall events prior to or after a hit or fall | **Symptoms Reported by Athletes**   * Headache or “pressure” in head * Nausea or vomiting * Balance problems or dizziness * Double or blurry vision * Sensitivity to light or noise * Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy * Concentration or memory problems or confusion * Just not “feeling right” or “feeling down” |

**Did You Know?**

* Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness
* Athletes who have, at any point in their lives, had a concussion have an increased risk for another concussion
* Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults

**Remember...Concussions affect people differently.** While most athletes with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days, or even weeks. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.