



POLICY 31

CONCUSSIONS

In compliance with Tennessee Code Annotated Section 68-55-503, TSSA has adopted guidelines and forms as developed by the Tennessee Department of Health to inform and educate coaches, young athletes, and their parents or guardians of the nature, risk and symptoms of concussion and head injury.

Every individual involved in youth athletics must become more proactive in identifying and treating athletes who show signs of concussion or head injury. In order to address this critical issue, the National Federation of State High School Associations includes the following language in every sport rule book publication:

Any player 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 game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

Education is the key to identifying and treating youth athletes who show signs of a concussion during athletic participation. It is very important that every administrator, coach, parent, official, athlete and health-care professional know the symptoms and steps to take when dealing with student-athletes that display signs of a possible concussion. Concussion can be a serious health issue and should be treated as such.

TSSA is asking every member team and club to adopt and comply with the terms set forth below in compliance with Tennessee law.

1. Information concerning the nature, risk and symptoms of concussion and head injury should be reviewed by all administrators, coaches, youth athletes and their parent or guardian. Every individual involved in athletics at the sponsoring school or youth organization must review concussion information annually and sign a form that states this process has been completed as set forth below. The Tennessee Department of Health has concussion information available on its

website at <http://health.state.tn.us/tbi/concussion.htm>. (See Signs/Symptoms of Concussion attached).

2. All athletic directors and coaches, whether employed or volunteer, shall annually complete a concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program approved by the Tennessee Department of Health. The concussion recognition and head injury safety education training programs are available on the Tennessee Department of Health website at <http://health.state.tn.us/tbi/concussion.htm> . The NFHS has developed a free 20-minute course online entitled “Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know” which may be accessed at www.nfhslearn.com and has been recommended by the Department of Health.
3. Prior to the annual initiation of practice or competition the following persons must review and sign a concussion and head injury information sheet: all coaches, athletic director, and any appointed licensed health care professional. (See Concussion Information and Signature Form for Coaches attached). This form is to be signed annually.
4. Prior to the annual initiation of practice or competition, all youth athletes and the athlete's parent or guardian should review a concussion and head injury information sheet. A form confirming this review (See Concussion Information and Signature Form for Athletes and Parents/Legal Guardians attached) shall be signed and returned by the youth athlete, if the athlete is 18 years of age or older; or, by the athlete's parent or guardian, for athletes younger than 18 years of age. This form is to be signed annually.
5. All documentation of the completion of a concussion recognition and head injury safety education course program and signed concussion and head injury information sheets shall be maintained by the athletic organization for a period of three years.
6. Any youth athlete who shows signs, symptoms and behavior consistent with a concussion shall immediately be removed from the activity or competition for evaluation by a licensed medical doctor, if available, and if not, by the coach or

other designated person. (See Tennessee Protocol for Response of Schools/Community-Based Youth Athletic Organization Representatives). In determining whether a youth athlete suffered from a possible concussion, the centers for disease control and prevention's concussion signs and symptoms checklist shall be utilized. (See CDC Concussion Signs and Symptoms Checklist attached).

7. No youth athlete who has been removed from play due to suspected concussion shall return to practice or competition until the youth athlete is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance from the health care provider for a full or graduated return to play.¹ The attached Concussion Return to Play Form has been approved by TDH and should be used in practices and games. (See Tennessee Concussion Return to Play Form attached). The form contains specific instructions that shall be followed before an athlete can return to sports. The form is to be completed and signed by a licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician or a clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training before an athlete that has been removed from practice or a game may return to participate. A copy of the form must be kept on file by the youth athletic organization administrator for a period of three years.

Concussion Forms and Checklists

[Concussion Signs and Symptoms](#)

[Concussion Form for Coaches](#)

[Concussion Form for Student Athletes and Parent/Legal Guardian](#)

[Tennessee Concussion Return to Play Form](#)

¹ This is not required if there is a legitimate explanation other than a concussion for the signs, symptoms or behavior observed. Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-55-503(b)(1)(G).