

**Guidelines & Procedures – HB 284 – Return to Play Act  
Concussion and Head Injury**

**Concussion Information and Education**

With the passage of **HB 284 - Return to Play Act** by the Georgia Legislature in 2013, new requirements to educate coaches, youth athletes and their parents on the dangers of concussions in competitive youth athletic activities will become effective for all competitive sports in January 2014. The Georgia Department of Public Health is referring everyone to the "**Heads Up - Concussion in Youth Sports**" program offered by the Center of Disease Control (CDC). Gwinnett County Parks & Recreation (GCPR) will use the before mentioned education program for all competitive sports provided by GCPR, and will recommend the same education program to all youth sports partners (Gwinnett County Athletic Associations (GCAA) and Gwinnett County Summer Swim Leagues (GCSSL)) that utilize GCPR facilities.

A link to the program on the CDC website can be found here: [CDC - Concussion Program](#)

**Definition**

A concussion is a type of brain injury that is caused by a blow to the head or body that jars or shakes the brain inside the skull. It is important to note that an athlete does not have to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion.

**Symptoms Reported by Athlete**

- Headache
- Nausea
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion

**Signs Observed by Others**

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Cannot recall events prior to hit
- Cannot recall events after hit

**Purpose**

The following guidelines and procedures are being implemented by GCPR with the intent to reduce the potentially serious health risks associated with competitive sports related concussions and head injuries.

**Guidelines**

GCPR will educate coaches, referees, site supervisors, parents and participants of the signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with sports induced concussions.

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**Procedure**

**I. Distribution**

- A. Parents, Coaches, assistant coaches and site supervisors associated with competitive sport activities should become familiar with and have access to a copy of GCPR's Concussion and Head Injury Guidelines.
- B. Parents, Coaches and assistant coaches are strongly encouraged to view the "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports" online course from the Center for Disease Control (CDC). This online course can be found at the link listed below.  
[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online\\_training.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html)
- C. Staff and Site Supervisors will take the "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports" online course.
- D. GCPR will provide concussion educational information to all coaches and officials. (See Attached)
- E. GCPR will provide concussion educational information to all youth athletes and their parent/legal guardian. The parent/legal guardian must sign an acknowledgement of receipt. (See Attached)
- F. GCPR will provide concussion educational information to all GCAA and GCSSL who utilize GCPR facilities in the 2014 GCAA and GCSSL Policies & Procedures Manual. It is recommended to all GCAA and GCSSL that they provide educational information per **HB 48** to all coaches, participants and their parents.

**2. Suspected Concussion Procedures for GCPR provided programs**

- A. Any participant exhibiting the signs, symptoms or behaviors associated with a concussion or head injury: (1) must be immediately removed from the activity. **Remember: When In Doubt Sit Them Out!!**
- B. The injured participant's parent or guardian should be immediately notified of the suspected concussion or head injury so they can be taken and evaluated by an appropriate healthcare professional.
- C. An Accident or Injury Report Form must be submitted to GCPR within 24 hours or on the next business day following the incident.

House Bill 284 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Pruett of the 149<sup>th</sup>, Kaiser of the 59<sup>th</sup>, Mitchell of the 88<sup>th</sup>, Cooper of the 43<sup>rd</sup>, Coleman of the 97<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 15 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia  
2 Annotated, relating to miscellaneous provisions under the "Quality Basic Education Act,"  
3 so as to enact the "Return to Play Act of 2013"; to require public and private schools which  
4 provide youth athletic activities to provide information to parents on the nature and risk of  
5 concussion and head injury and to establish concussion management and return to play  
6 policies; to require public recreation facilities to provide information to parents on the nature  
7 and risk of concussion and head injury; to provide for definitions; to provide for the  
8 endorsement of concussion recognition education courses; to provide for limited liability; to  
9 provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and  
10 for other purposes.

11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

12 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

13 This Act shall be known and may be referred to as the "Return to Play Act of 2013."

14 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 2.**

15 Part 15 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
16 relating to miscellaneous provisions under the "Quality Basic Education Act," is amended  
17 by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

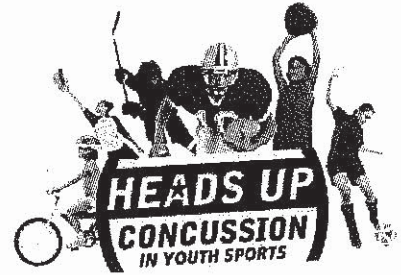
18 "20-2-324.1.

19 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

20 (1) 'Health care provider' means a licensed physician or another licensed individual under  
21 the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant,  
22 or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and  
23 management.

24 (2) 'Public recreation facility' means a public facility that conducts an organized youth  
25 athletic activity in which a participation fee and registration are required.

- 26 (3) 'Youth athlete' means a participant in a youth athletic activity who is seven years of  
27 age or older and under 19 years of age.
- 28 (4) 'Youth athletic activity' means an organized athletic activity in which the majority of  
29 the participants are youth athletes and are engaging in an organized athletic game or  
30 competition against another team, club, or entity or in practice or preparation for an  
31 organized game or competition against another team, club, or entity. This term shall not  
32 include college or university activities or an activity which is entered into for  
33 instructional purposes only, an athletic activity that is incidental to a nonathletic program,  
34 youth athletic activities offered through a church or synagogue, or a lesson; provided,  
35 however, that colleges, universities, churches, and synagogues, and any other entities that  
36 conduct youth athletic activities but are not subject to this Code section are strongly  
37 encouraged to establish and implement a concussion management and return to play  
38 policy.
- 39 (b) Each local board of education, administration of a nonpublic school, and governing  
40 body of a charter school shall adopt and implement a concussion management and return  
41 to play policy comprising not less than the following components:
- 42 (1) Prior to the beginning of each athletic season of a youth athletic activity, provide an  
43 information sheet to all youth athletes' parents or legal guardians which informs them of  
44 the nature and risk of concussion and head injury;
- 45 (2) If a youth athlete participating in a youth athletic activity exhibits symptoms of  
46 having a concussion, that athlete shall be removed from the game, competition, tryout,  
47 or practice and be evaluated by a health care provider; and
- 48 (3) If a youth athlete is deemed by a health care provider to have sustained a concussion,  
49 the coach or other designated personnel shall not permit the youth athlete to return to play  
50 until the youth athlete receives clearance from a health care provider for a full or  
51 graduated return to play.
- 52 (c) Each public recreation facility shall, at the time of registration for a youth athletic  
53 activity, provide an information sheet to all youth athletes' parents or legal guardians which  
54 informs them of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury; provided, however, that  
55 public recreation facilities are strongly encouraged to establish and implement a concussion  
56 management and return to play policy.
- 57 (d) The Department of Public Health shall endorse one or more concussion recognition  
58 education courses to inform Georgia citizens of the nature and risk of concussions in youth  
59 athletics, at least one of which shall be available online. Such course or courses may  
60 include education and training materials made available, at no charge, by the federal  
61 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or other training materials substantively and  
62 substantially similar to such materials.



# Parent/Athlete Concussion Information Sheet

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by 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 or blow to the head can be serious.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION?

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

### 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.

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.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETES
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or “pressure” in head
Is confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise
Loses consciousness ( <i>even briefly</i> )	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can't recall events <i>prior</i> to hit or fall	Confusion
Can't recall events <i>after</i> hit or fall	Just not “feeling right” or “feeling down”

## 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 to the head or body 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
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
- Has unusual behavior
- Loses consciousness (*even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously*)

## 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.*

It's better to miss one game than the whole season. For more information on concussions, visit: [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion).

### *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.

## 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's OK 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student-Athlete Name Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student-Athlete Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Legal Guardian Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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