

# **USA Swimming Operational Risk Committee Consensus Statement on Concussions**

## **1.0 Purpose**

The operational risk committee is responsible for providing a proactive environment regarding assessment of risks, and developing guidelines and educational requirements. USA Swimming and its members are aware of the growing concern regarding concussion management. The purpose of this document is to implement guidelines for member clubs (Clubs), Local Swimming Committees (LSCs) and meet hosts (Hosts). USA Swimming is providing a sample document which may be modified to meet your state requirements.

## **2.0 Guidelines**

All athletes, coaches, officials and parents should receive fact sheets on concussions from their Club, LSC and/or Hosts. Any athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion should be removed immediately and should not return until evaluated and cleared by a licensed health care professional, trained and experienced in evaluating and management of concussions, acting within scope of practice. Compliance with all state and local laws dealing with concussion is the responsibility of the Club and/or LSC. A sample fact sheet is attached to this Policy. Electronic communication of the fact sheet (email blast) is permitted.

## **3.0 Application of the Guidelines**

Clubs, LSCs, and Hosts are responsible for compliance with state laws regarding concussion management and education. Each state may have specific regulations that impact USA Swimming member clubs, coaches, officials, and/or sanctioned events. Some examples: Many states require coaches and officials to take courses on recognizing the symptoms of concussions and head injuries. Other states require sharing of fact sheets on concussions with coaching staff, officials, athletes and parents. A few states, such as California, may require organizations using school district facilities provide a statement of compliance with the policies for the management of concussion and head injuries required of the school districts by state laws. All of these guidelines are designed to protect an athlete, who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury during an event, from returning to practice or competition until they are evaluated and cleared by a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions, acting within the scope of his or her practice. Most states, the National Federation of State High School Associations, and the CDC have educational resources that can be utilized. Concussion fact sheets must be shared with coaches, athletes, officials and parents.

## **4.0 Objectives**

The primary goal of the Guidelines is to reduce the risk of harm to athletes and to educate coaches, parents, officials, clubs, LSCs, and hosts on the importance of concussion management. To the extent that health care professionals are involved in USA Swimming sanctioned events, they should review the Guidelines and the Consensus statement on concussion in sport developed at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich, November 2012, or similar educational material.

## 5.0 What is a Concussion?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define concussion as “a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works.” Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. The Zurich Conference on Concussion in Sport also states that concussion typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurological function that resolves spontaneously. However, symptoms and signs may evolve over a number of minutes to hours or in some cases may be even more prolonged.

## 6.0 Signs and Symptoms of Concussions:

Athletes do not have to be “knocked out” to have a concussion. In fact, less than 1 out of 10 concussions result in loss of consciousness. Concussion symptoms can develop right away or up to 48 hours after the injury. Ignoring signs or symptoms can put an athlete’s health at risk!

### Signs Observed by Coaches, Officials, Parents or Guardians

- Appears dazed, stunned or confused
- Unsure about event, location, or name of meet
- Forgets an instruction or assignment
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior or personality changes – irritability, sadness, nervousness, emotional
- Can’t recall events before or after incident

### Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Any headache or “pressure” in head - how badly it hurts does not matter
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”
- Trouble falling asleep
- Sleeping more or less than usual

## 7.0 Administration

- Most states have passed legislation to establish laws and policies for concussion management and education to effectively prevent and diagnosis the condition.
- Each Club, LSC, and Host is responsible to identify and be in compliance with the state and local laws including educational and insurance requirements for the management and treatment of concussions.
- All coaches, officials, athletes, and parents should be familiar with the concussion information sheet for swimmers and the Guidelines.
- LSC Officials Chairs are responsible for distributing the Guidelines to “Unattached” Officials.
- USA Swimming provides members an excess accident medical insurance policy through

Mutual of Omaha. This policy is excess to a member's personal medical insurance coverage while participating in an USA Swimming sanctioned, sponsored, or approved event, including practice. The policy becomes primary if the member has no medical insurance coverage with a \$100 deductible. The coverage is outlined on the USA Swimming website under member resources/programs and services/insurance and risk management. If your state has a specific insurance requirement, USA Swimming Risk Management should be notified and contacted immediately so the appropriate certificates of insurance (COIs) can be issued.

## **8.0 Reference Material**

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

[www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion)

### **Zurich Concussion Conference (2012)**

Consensus statement on concussion in sport: the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich, November 2012 - <http://bjsm.bmj.com/content/47/5/250.full>

### **California Assembly Bill 25**

School districts that permit athletic competition by nonprofit organizations require an athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury during the meet or practice to be immediately removed from the activity for the remainder of the day. The athlete cannot return until he or she is evaluated by, and receives written clearance from, a licensed health care provider, trained in the management of concussions, acting within the scope of his or her practice.

### **ODH Violence and Injury Prevention Program**

[www.healthyohioprogram.org/concussion](http://www.healthyohioprogram.org/concussion)

### **National Federation of State High School Associations**

[www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org) – Index concussions and see “A parent's guide to concussion in sports”.