



TO / À: U SPORTS Membership
FROM / DE: Dr. Taryn Taylor
DATE: April 10, 2019
SUBJECT / OBJECT: Concussion Statement and Guidelines

As you may know, in 2017 U SPORTS formed an ad hoc Sports Medicine and Research Science Committee, with the goal of providing expertise and leadership in helping our member institutions promote a healthy and safe environment for student-athletes and coaches through research, education, collaboration, and policy development. I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of that Committee.

U SPORTS believes that physical activity and sport participation provide positive developmental and health outcomes in terms of physical, cognitive, social and emotional domains. We recognize that many physical activities and sports have an inherent risk of sport injury, including concussion.

Although U SPORTS' jurisdiction and control is limited to national championships and U SPORTS-organized events, U SPORTS is also committed to assisting our member institutions in their efforts to provide a safe and healthy environment for sport participation throughout the year. We are providing this Concussion Statement and these Guidelines in order to assist member institutions in reducing the incidence of concussions and improve concussion outcomes for university student-athletes. Concussion in sport is a significant public health issue that requires a multifaceted approach. National organizations such as the Canadian Concussion Collaborative (CCC) and Parachute Canada have made recommendations for policy development regarding sport-related concussion prevention and management in Canada. U SPORTS supports their recommendation that organizations responsible for operating, regulating or planning sport and sporting events with a risk of concussion should be required to develop/adapt and implement a concussion management protocol. This protocol should be based on applicable law, scientific evidence, and informed best practices, but can be customized for context and available resources.

The Government of Canada has committed to address the issue of concussion in sport. The Federal/Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation are working towards the development of pan-Canadian Concussion

Guidelines. They endorse, in principle, a harmonized approach to address the issue of concussions including five key components: awareness, prevention, detection, management and surveillance. The pan-Canadian Concussion Guidelines incorporate the updated International Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport in the development of national return to learn and return to play protocols.

U SPORTS references the most recent 2016 Berlin Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport as the recognized international guideline for concussion management. The Consensus Statement affirms that all athletes should be managed using the same treatment and return to play paradigms. U SPORTS will continue to monitor international progress regarding concussion in sport and integrate new research and knowledge as appropriate.

Ultimately, the responsibility for implementing, enforcing, and overseeing concussion management protocols falls to each member institution. Below are U SPORTS' recommendations to member institutions, based on current industry standards, for consideration and inclusion in their respective protocols, based on the five key components noted above.

1. Awareness

The Consensus Statement identifies education as a mainstay to concussion management. There is evidence that concussion education leads to a reduction in incidence and improved outcomes for concussion. Member institutions are encouraged to use education to promote an environment that optimizes the early identification of suspected concussions by all stakeholders including student-athletes, coaches, and health care providers. Each institution should provide annual education about the signs and symptoms of concussion to student-athletes.

2. Prevention

Member institutions are encouraged to foster an environment of fair play. This includes teaching student-athletes respect for themselves, their teammates and opponents, and keeping themselves and teammates safe and healthy when they play. All participants should be aware of the importance of respecting the rules of the game and the rules should be consistently enforced. Member institution coaches should be knowledgeable and current in safe practices in sport. They should be familiar with the risks of concussion and how to minimize risks. Coaches, where appropriate by sport, should be up to date with current body contact skills and techniques.

Member institutions should strive to create a concussion culture where student-athletes feel safe to report a concussion. Student-athletes should be encouraged to tell the coach and health care provider when they are injured or hurt (or suspect that another student-athlete may be concussed). The health and safety of the student-athlete is our top priority and should be our member institutions' top priority. Member institutions should

encourage strong lines of communication between the student-athlete, coach, and health care provider in the management of a concussed student-athlete to ensure a safe return to learn and play.

3. Detection

A student-athlete who has experienced a mechanism of injury that is associated with an increased risk of concussion should be removed from play. A concussion should be suspected when a student-athlete experiences an injury or impact that may result in concussion, and is exhibiting unusual behavior and/or reports symptoms that could be consistent with concussion sequelae.

4. Management

Each U SPORTS member institution should have a documented Concussion Management Plan. As per national guidelines, further evaluation by a physician should be required to assist with diagnosis and management of concussion prior to returning to learn and play. Management should also involve identification of comorbid conditions that can impair recovery. The Concussion Protocol and Management Plans should include protocols for return to learn and play, which should be developed and applied according to best practice guidelines.

5. Surveillance

Each U SPORTS member institution should work toward developing mechanisms to track injury and concussion incidences to allow them to make program-specific decisions to reduce concussions and injuries overall.

Research

In addition to the five key components noted above, the U SPORTS Sports Medicine and Research Science Committee supports ethics-approved research initiatives to study the detection, diagnosis, sequelae, morbidity, and reinjury rates related to concussions.

References

1. Canadian Concussion Collaborative. <http://casem-acmse.org/education/ccc/> (January 2017)
2. McCrory P, Meeuwisse W, Dvorak J, et al. Consensus statement on concussion in sport—the 5th international conference on concussion in sport held in Berlin, October 2016. *Br J Sports Med* Published Online First: 26 April 2017. doi: 10.1136/bjsports-2017-097699

3. Can West Concussion Statement Guidelines. Can West Medical Handbook. (June 2017)
4. OUA Student-Athlete Health Protection Policy (July 2015)
5. Parachute Canada. www.parachutecanada.org
6. Sport Information Resource Center. <https://sirc.ca/concussion>