

SECTION 4: POLICIES



4.20 HEAD INJURY AND CONCUSSION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This policy explains Virtus' policy on the participation of athletes in Virtus competition who have sustained a head injury or concussion.

2. HEAD INJURY

- 2.1. A head injury is any trauma that leads to injury of the scalp, skull or brain usually resulting from an injury above the collar bone, but can be transmitted from other body parts to the head. The injuries can range from a minor bump (bruise or laceration) on the skull to serious brain injury.
- 2.2. Head injuries are a very common sporting injury and may occur from direct contact with another athlete, equipment or the ground.
- 2.3. All head injuries are serious even if the athlete appears normal and unaffected. Some head injuries take time to develop and it could be several hours before symptoms develop. Series injuries can may lead to the person collapsing and even death if not treated properly.
- 2.4. Head injuries may be present in conscious or unconscious players.
- 2.5. Some sports are more at risk than others including football and contact sports.

3. CONCUSSION

- 3.1. Concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a blow to the head region. Concussion has a rapid onset of symptoms that usually last from 7 to 10 days in duration and may or may not involve the player losing consciousness.
- 3.2. While injury to the brain can be fatal, most concussions recover completely with correct management.
- 3.3. The symptoms of concussion might include:
 - Severe neck pain
 - Deteriorating consciousness (more drowsy)
 - Increasing confusion or irritability
 - Severe or increasing headache
 - Repeated vomiting
 - Unusual behaviour change
 - Seizure (fit)
 - Double vision
 - Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs

4. COMPETITION POLICY

- 4.1. Athletes sustaining a head injury should be assessed by the appointed medical professional. Where possible this person should be independent of the athletes' team.
- 4.2. Athletes who have received a blow to the head, sufficient to render them unconscious (even where they have apparently recovered) should always have a medical examination in

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hospital.

- 4.3. In ALL cases of suspected concussion, the athlete should be referred to a medical professional for diagnosis and advice, even if the symptoms resolve.
- 4.4. Athletes who sustain concussion or show signs of concussion following head injury **MUST BE IMMEDIATELY** removed from competition and training.
- 4.5. Virtus recommend that athletes who sustain concussion should not compete/train for a period of one month. Athletes sustaining concussion in the month before competition should be withdrawn from the team.
- 4.6. The detail of the injury, assessment by a medical professional and any subsequent decisions should be recorded in writing and signed by the appointed medical professional. This should be securely retained by the Virtus Official Representative.

Updated 27 November 2019