

Wisconsin's Concussion Law and Officials

The law requires immediate removal of an individual from a youth athletic activity if symptoms indicate a possible concussion has been sustained. Subsequently, if a concussion is confirmed, individuals may only return to competition or practice after being evaluated by a trained health care provider. The health care provider is required to provide written clearance in order for the athlete to return to action.

Officials are affected by the following section of the law:

Section 1. 118.293 of the statutes is created to read: 118.293 Concussion and head injury.

(4) (a) An athletic coach, or official involved in a youth athletic activity, or health care provider shall remove a person from the youth athletic activity if the coach, official, or health care provider determines that the person exhibits signs, symptoms, or behavior consistent with a concussion or head injury or the coach, official, or health care provider suspects the person has sustained a concussion or head injury.

While coaches and officials are not expected to make a diagnosis of concussion, it is expected for coaches and officials to be aware that the athletes may have a concussion and then hold them out of all activity until they are medically cleared by a healthcare provider. Signs are what can be seen by others, like clumsiness, while symptoms are what the injured player feels, like a headache.

These are some **SIGNS** of concussion (what **others** can see in an injured athlete):

- Dazed or stunned appearance
- Change in the level of consciousness or awareness
- Confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Unsure of score, game, opponent
- Clumsy
- Answers more slowly than usual
- Shows behavior changes
- Loss of consciousness
- Asks repetitive questions or memory concerns

These are some of the more common **SYMPTOMS** of concussion (what an injured athlete feels):

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizzy or unsteady
- Sensitive to light or noise
- Feeling mentally foggy
- Problems with concentration and memory
- Confused
- Slow

The law also includes provisions to protect coaches, officials or volunteers from liability if they fail to remove an athlete from competition, unless there is gross negligence or gross misconduct.

Injured athletes can exhibit many or just a few of the signs and/or symptoms of concussion. However, if a player exhibits any signs or symptoms of concussion, the responsibility is simple: remove them from participation. **"When in doubt sit them out."**

If you suspect a player may have a concussion, that athlete should be immediately removed from play. The injured athlete should be kept out of play until they are cleared to return by an appropriate health care provider.

For more information, please visit the WIAA web site: <http://www.wiaawi.org/index.php?id=430>