

Coach's Brain Injury Resources

Fact Sheet

On May 14, 2009 the Governor of Washington Christine Gregoire signed the **Zackery Lystedt Law**. **Effective July 26, 2009**, the Lystedt Law directly affects youth sports and head injury policies particularly how you, as a coach, need to respond to player injuries. The new law requires that:

1. An informed consent must be signed by parents and youth athletes acknowledging the risk of head injury prior to practice or competition
2. A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury must be removed from play – “when in doubt, sit them out”
3. A youth athlete who has been removed from play **must receive written clearance from a licensed health care provider prior to returning to play**

THE FACTS

- A concussion is a **brain injury**.
- All concussions are **serious**.
- Concussions can occur **without** loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur **in any sport**.
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they **first occur** can help prevent further injury or even death.

ACTION PLAN

WHAT SHOULD A COACH DO WHEN A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED?

1. Remove the athlete from play. Look for the signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head. Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of concussion should not be allowed to return to play. When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
 - Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head
 - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long
 - Any memory loss immediately following the injury
 - Any seizures immediately following the injury
 - Number of previous concussions (if any)
3. Inform the athlete’s parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion. Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.
4. **Allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion.** A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. Prevent common long-term problems and the rare second impact syndrome by delaying the athlete’s return to the activity until the player receives appropriate medical evaluation and approval for return to play.

Licensed Health Care Providers

Medical Doctors (MD)
Doctor of Osteopathy (DO)
Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP)
Physicians Assistant (PA)
Licensed Certified Athletic Trainers (ATC)

