



CITY OF OTTAWA RINGETTE ASSOCIATION (CORA)

Concussion and Return to Play Policy

October 2015

Background

CORA Executive wanted to develop a clear policy for dealing with athletes who may have suffered a concussion. The Executive wanted to ensure that the decision-making process is transparent and easy to understand. The Executive wanted to ensure that there is accountability built into the system. Most importantly, the Executive wanted to create a policy that ensures that our athletes' health and well-being is paramount and that they are not returned to play before they have fully recovered from an injury.

Application

This policy applies to all CORA teams, and all CORA bench staff, athletes and parents are expected to follow the procedures. Every adult involved directly with our athletes must be proactive in identifying those athletes who demonstrate symptoms of a sports related concussion and do their best in assisting them return to play safely.

Process

The basic principle is that any athlete who exhibits symptoms, signs or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game or practice and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate healthcare practitioner using the CORA Return to Play Form.

Here is a further breakdown of these steps:

1. Removal from Play During Event

During a game or practice, it is the trainer's sole discretion as to whether a player should be removed for the duration of the event. The cause for this removal can be an injury at the event itself, or it may be a previous injury, including ones that are not related to ringette.

2. Assessment of Injury

If a concussion is suspected, trainers shall use the following assessment tools: called the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool - check link

<http://bjsm.bmj.com/content/47/5/267.full.pdf>

For each assessment done, the trainer shall make a note of the results of the assessment in a trainer log, regardless of whether or not the athlete is removed from play or not.

3. Continued Removal from Play

If an athlete who is removed from play, or has an injury from an incident outside ringette, exhibits any signs or behaviors consistent with the concussion assessment tool, then the trainer will advise the coach and the parents of the results of the assessment and the athlete will continue to be held out of play.

The parents will be provided with a CORA Return to Play (Appendix A) form to be filled out by a healthcare practitioner who is able to make a diagnosis (either a physician or a nurse practitioner) before the athlete is able to return to training or playing.

4. Situation where Signs or Behaviors are Not Exhibited

If an athlete is injured, either during the game, practice, or an event outside of ringette, but does not exhibit any signs or behaviours consistent with the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool, but there is concern* about returning her to play, then a three-way meeting between the:

- head coach
- trainer
- parent

must take place prior to returning her to play. If the head coach is not available, then the head coach may delegate the meeting responsibility to another member of the coaching staff

*the concern can come from either the head coach, the trainer, the parent or the player.

If, during the meeting, any of these 3 people have a concern about returning the girl to play, then the athlete will be required to have a Return to Play Form signed by a healthcare practitioner prior to returning her to play.

If none of the 3 persons involved in the meeting has concerns about returning the athlete to play, then she will be able to return at the next possible opportunity.

During the meeting, the trainer should take written notes detailing the concerns of each of the parties. If all three parties agree that the athlete is able to return to play, then the trainer shall document this agreement in some manner.

General

1. Trainers will ensure that the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool is in the First Aid kit for easy access as well as a trainer log book to document each assessment. The log book and any return to play forms

will be kept by the trainer.

2. Every Team Official (Bench Staff, including Trainers and Managers) will be required to complete on-line training regarding concussion awareness. At the time of the writing of this policy, the preferred CORA course on this is <http://www.coach.ca/concussion-awareness-s16361>
3. Once this policy has been approved all parents will be required to sign off on the policy at the beginning of each season.
4. If trainers need to consult on a particular issue or set of facts, they should contact the Director, Risk and Safety on the CORA Executive.
5. Players and Parents are encouraged to advise the trainer if the athlete received a suspected concussion outside of ringette.

Selected Examples

1. Anna falls on the ice during a game and gets back up and continues her shift. When she comes off, the trainer notices that she immediately sits on the bench and is not herself. The trainer talks to her and suspects a concussion. The trainer advises the coach that she is removing the player from the game. The trainer uses the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool and Anna is exhibiting a few of the signs.

In this situation, Anna will be required to have the Return to Play form filled out before she returns to practice or a game.

2. Bethany takes a hit on the ice and a penalty is called against the other player. When Bethany comes off the ice, the trainer uses the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool, however the girl does not exhibit any of the symptoms. Bethany plays some shifts in the second half. After the game, the parents express that they are surprised that the trainer allowed her to go back on the ice as they had seen the hit.

In this situation, a three-way meeting must be called prior to the next ice time. Unless all three (3) participants (head coach, trainer, parent) agree that the athlete is able to return to the ice then Bethany will be required to have the Return to Play form filled out before she returns to practice or a game.

3. In the first game of an out-of-town weekend tournament, Clara is injured during the game. The trainer uses the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool, and the girl is exhibiting disorientation and confusion. She is removed from the game and the parents are asked to get a Return to Play form signed by a healthcare practitioner. The families return to the hotel, and Clara takes a nap in the afternoon. The parents call the Trainer that evening and advise that Clara is wholly recovered and would like to play in the game the next morning. They credit the disorientation in the assessment to being tired from travel.

In this situation, Clara will be required to have the Return to Play form filled out before she returns to practice or a game. If the parents wish, they can seek medical treatment at the location of the tournament.

