# MHSAA PROTOCOL FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL FEDERATION SPORTS PLAYING RULES FOR CONCUSSIONS

**"Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional."**

The language above, which appears in all National Federation sports rule books, reflects a strengthening of rules regarding the safety of athletes suspected of having a concussion. This language reflects an increasing focus on safety and acknowledges that the vast majority of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness.

This protocol is intended to provide the mechanics to follow during the course of contests and practices when an athlete sustains an apparent concussion.

1. The officials will have no role in determining concussion other than the obvious one where a player is either unconscious or apparently unconscious. Officials will merely point out to a coach that a player is apparently injured and advise that the player should be examined by a health care professional for an exact determination of the extent of injury.
2. If it is confirmed by the school's designated health care professional that the student did not sustain a concussion, the head coach may so advise the officials during an appropriate stoppage of play and the athlete may reenter competition pursuant to the contest rules.
3. If a student is removed during practice by a coach or other staff member, he or she shall not return to practice that day unless it is confirmed by the designated health care professional that the student did not sustain a concussion.
4. Otherwise, if competition continues while the athlete is withheld for an apparent concussion, that athlete may not be returned to competition that day but is subject to the return to play protocol.
    a. The clearance may not be on the same date on which the athlete was removed from play.
    b. Only an M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner may clear the individual to return to activity.
    c. The clearance must be in writing **and must be unconditional. It is not sufficient that the M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner has approved the student to begin a return-to-play progression. The medical examiner must approve the student's return to unrestricted activity.**
    d. Individual school, districts and leagues may have more stringent requirements and protocols including but not limited to mandatory periods of inactivity, screening and post-concussion testing prior or after to the written clearance for return to activity.
5. Following the contest, an Officials Report shall be filed with a removed player's school and the MHSAA **if the situation was brought to the officials' attention.**
6. **<u>ONLINE REPORTING</u>: Member schools are required to complete and submit an online report designated by the MHSAA to record and track head injury events when they occur in all levels of all sports during the season in practices and competitions. Schools with no concussions for a season (fall, winter and spring) are required to report this at the conclusion of that season.**
7. **<u>POST-CONCUSSION CONSENT FORM</u>:** Prior to returning to physical activity (practice or competition) the student and parent (if a minor student) must complete the Post-Concussion Consent Form which accompanies the written unconditional clearance of an M.D., D.O., P.A or N.P. **This form should be kept on file at the school for seven years after the student's graduation and emailed to concussion@mhsaa.com.**
8. In cases where an assigned MHSAA tournament physician (MD/DO/PA/NP) is present, his or her decision to not allow an athlete to return to activity may not be overruled.

## NON-COMPLIANCE WITH CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Following are the consequences for not complying with National Federation and MHSAA rules when players are removed from play because of a concussion:

- A concussed student is ineligible to return to any athletic meet or contest on the same day the concussion is sustained.
- A concussed student is ineligible to enter a meet or contest on a *subsequent day* without the written authorization of an M.D., D.O., Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner and the MHSAA-designated "Post-Concussion Return to Activity Consent Form" also signed by the student and parent.

These students are considered ineligible players and any meet or contest which they enter is forfeited.

In addition, that program is placed on probation through that sport season of the following school year.

For a second offense in that sport during the probationary period – that program is continued on probation through that sport season of the following school year and not permitted to participate in the MHSAA tournament in that sport during the original and extended probationary period. A school which fails to submit required online concussion reports will be subject to the penalties of Regulation V, Section 4 A. This includes reporting zero if no concussions occurred in a season.