



# NEW BEDFORD WHALERS

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS



A Fact Sheet for Parents and Student-Athletes

## HEADS UP: Concussion in High School Sports

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed a Concussion Law, [MGL c.111, s.222](#) effective July 19, 2010, regarding students participating in extracurricular interscholastic activities. Please note the main provisions which apply to all public schools and any school subject to Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules are:

- (1) Coaches, athletic trainers, parents, parent volunteers, physicians/nurses involved with school activities, athletic directors, and marching band directors must participate in annual concussion training.
- (2) Removal of any athlete suspected of having a concussion from practice/game.
- (3) Student-Athletes cannot return to practice/game until evaluated by a licensed physician, neuropsychologist, certified athletic trainer, or other health care professional and receive written medical authorization to do so.
- (4) School districts must maintain compliance records.

### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. **All concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost.

### What are the Signs and Symptoms?

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days after the injury. If your teen reports **one or more** symptoms of concussion listed below, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, keep your teen out of play and seek medical attention right away.

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians	Symptoms Reported by Student-Athletes	What Should <u>YOU</u> Do if You Think Your Teen has a Concussion?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appears dazed or stunned</li> <li>• Is confused about assignment or position</li> <li>• Forgets an instruction</li> <li>• Is unsure of game, score, opponent</li> <li>• Moves clumsily</li> <li>• Answers questions slowly</li> <li>• Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes</li> <li>• Can't recall events <i>prior</i> to hit or fall</li> <li>• Can't recall events <i>after</i> hit or fall</li> <li>• Loses consciousness (<i>even briefly</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headache or “pressure” in head</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li> <li>• Double or blurry vision</li> <li>• Sensitivity to light or noise</li> <li>• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy</li> <li>• Concentration or memory problems</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Keep your teen out play.</b> Don't assess it yourself. Seek the advice of a health care professional.</li> <li><b>2. Seek medical attention right away.</b> A health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your teen to return to sports.</li> <li><b>3. Teach your teen that it's not smart to play with a concussion.</b> Rest is key after a concussion. Sometimes athletes wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Don't let your teen convince you that s/he's “just fine.”</li> <li><b>4. TELL your teen's coaches, athletic trainers, and the student's school nurse about ANY concussion.</b> Your teen may need to limit activities while s/he is recovering from a concussion. If needed, the health care professional can help adjust your teen's school activities during her/his recovery.</li> </ol>

# IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.

## **What can happen if my teen keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?**

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be **removed from play immediately**. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the student-athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athlete will often under report symptoms of injuries. And concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student-athlete's safety.

**Remember:** Concussions affect people differently. While most athletes with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days, or even weeks. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.

## PARENT/ATHLETE HEAD INJURY DISCLOSURE FORM

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 111, Section 222, participants of interscholastic athletic programs, and their parents, prior to each season must disclose any information relative to any head injury history (whether it be sports related or none sports related). This information must be shared with the athlete's coach(s) and a copy will be kept on file in the Certified Athletic Trainers office.

1. Have you ever exhibited signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) during practice and/or competition at any level?  YES  NO
2. Have you ever been diagnosed with a concussion (sports or non-sports related) by a health care professional?  YES  NO
3. Do you currently have or have you ever had athletic participation restrictions in relation to being diagnosed with a concussion?  YES  NO
4. If you answered **YES** to any of the above questions please **list** and **explain in detail** each individual circumstance (signs, symptoms, or behaviors **followed by the date of the incident**). \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT:** Students participating in extracurricular interscholastic activities; and their parents/guardians; must sign the acknowledgement below and return it to their school. **Students cannot practice or compete in those activities until this form is signed and returned.**

I attest that the above information is accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I have reviewed the "HEADS UP: Concussion in High School Sports" fact sheet and understand its contents.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Student-Athlete Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name