

Sanford Sports Concussion Program Pocket Card: Coaches

Signs and Symptoms

Athletes who experience one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

Signs observed by coaching staff	Symptoms reported by athlete
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or “pressure” in head
Is confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
Shows mood, behavior or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall	Confusion
Can’t recall events after hit or fall	Does not “feel right”

Action Plan

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, you should take the following four steps:

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the facts sheet on concussions.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says that athlete is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

Any athlete with a suspected concussion should not be allowed to return to play on the same day!

Red Flags – If any of the following signs and/or symptoms are present, immediately activate Emergency Medical Service EMS (Dial 911), so the athlete can be promptly taken to the nearest Emergency Department.

- Headache that worsens
- Seizure
- Looks very drowsy or can't be awakened
- Repeated vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Can't recognize people or places
- Increasing confusion or irritability
- Weakness or numbness in arms or legs
- Unusual behavior change
- Any loss of consciousness greater than 30 seconds