



Greater Toronto Hockey League Policy

Head Injuries and Concussions

Background (as defined by the Brain Association of America and the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine)

- A concussion may be sustained through a variety of mechanisms. A direct blow to the head, blow to the jaw, sudden twisting or shearing force and a sudden deceleration of the head (similar to a “whiplash” – type injury) can all produce concussive signs and symptoms.
- Both closed and open head injuries can produce a concussion. A concussion is the most common type of traumatic brain injury.
- A concussion is caused when the brain receives trauma from an impact or a sudden momentum or movement change. The blood vessels in the brain may stretch and cranial nerves may be damaged.
- A person may or may not experience a brief loss of consciousness (not exceeding 20 minutes). A person may remain conscious, but feel “dazed” or “punch drunk”.
- A concussion may or may not show up on a diagnostic imaging test, such as x-rays, CAT Scans and MRI’s.
- Skull fracture, brain bleeding, or swelling may or may not be present. Therefore, concussion is sometimes defined by exclusion and is considered a complex neurobehavioral syndrome.
- A concussion can cause diffuse axonal type injury resulting in permanent or temporary damage.
- A blood clot in the brain can occur occasionally and be fatal.
- It may take a few months to a few years for a concussion to heal.

GTHL Philosophy:

The GTHL believes that the participants safety and health is paramount and should be first and foremost in determining the most appropriate time in which a player may return to play once that individual has suffered a suspected or identified head injury.

GTHL Policy:

- 1) Any player who suffers a SUSPECTED Concussion must stop participation in the hockey activity immediately. If there is doubt as to whether a concussion has occurred, it is to be assumed that it has and that the player’s parents/guardian be encouraged to have the injury properly diagnosed at a hospital ASAP. A hockey activity is defined as any on-ice or off-ice team function involving physical activity.
AND
Any player who is diagnosed by a medical Doctor with any grade of concussion must stop participation in all hockey activities immediately. A hockey activity is defined as any on-ice or off-ice team function involving physical activity.
- 2) Team Officials are responsible to recommend to the individual’s parent or guardian that they seek medical attention immediately, especially if the injury incurred in any form of hockey participation.
- 3) The participant is not permitted to return to any hockey activity until written permission is given by a medical Doctor.
- 4) Copies of such documentation MUST be submitted to the GTHL Office prior to the participants return to any hockey activity.