

# Marian University Athletics

## **Policy: Concussion Management Plan**

**Date: July 1, 2010**

**Purpose.** The Marian University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is committed to the safety and well being of its student-athletes. It is committed to the prevention, identification, evaluation and management of concussions.

Therefore, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, in accordance with NCAA policy for institutions, has adopted a Concussion Management Plan for its student-athletes who exhibit signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion. The plan addresses the removal from practice or competition, evaluation by an experienced healthcare provider and the criteria for medical clearance to return to activity.

Student-athletes are required to sign the Notice of Risk statement which also addresses concussion signs and symptoms. The Athletic Training staff will annually present to student-athletes educational material on concussions.

**Definition of Concussion.** In accordance with the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Concussion in Sport (2008), a cerebral concussion is defined as a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by traumatic biomechanical forces. Common elements of concussions include:

1. May be caused by a direct blow to the head or elsewhere on the body with an 'impulsive' force transmitted to the head.
2. Typically result in a rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurologic function that resolves spontaneously.
3. May result in neuropathological changes, but acute clinical symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than structural injury.
4. Result in a graded set of clinical symptoms that may or may not involve loss of consciousness.
5. Resolution of the clinical and cognitive symptoms typically follows a sequential course, but post-concussive symptoms may be prolonged.
6. No abnormality is evident on standard structural neuroimaging studies.

**Signs and Symptoms of Concussion.** Concussions may cause abnormalities in clinical symptoms, physical signs, behavior, balance, cognition, and/or sleep. Signs and symptoms of concussions include, but are not limited to:

|                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Headache                      | Inability to focus                |
| Loss of consciousness         | Delayed verbal or motor responses |
| Visual disturbances           | Feeling like 'in a fog' or dazed  |
| Confusion or disorientation   | Ringing in ears                   |
| Amnesia                       | Irritability                      |
| Dizziness or balance problems | Emotional lability                |
| Slurred or incoherent speech  | Fatigue or feeling slowed down    |
| Nausea or vomiting            | Excessive drowsiness              |
| Vacant stare                  | Sleep disturbances                |

**Evaluation.** Any student-athlete exhibiting signs and symptoms of a concussion will be **immediately removed from play and evaluated by a physician or certified athletic trainer.** A physical and mental status examination will be performed by the athletics healthcare provider and any student-athlete diagnosed with a concussion **shall not return to activity for the remainder of that day.** The student-athlete will be serially monitored for deterioration and will be provided with written instructions if discharged home after suffering a concussion.

**Referral to Emergency Department.** Appropriate activation of the on-site Emergency Action Plan will occur for any student-athlete exhibiting focal neurological deficits, progressive or worsening signs and symptoms, and/or signs and symptoms of associated injuries (e.g. neck injury).

**Physician Referral.** Student-athletes who experience a concussion associated with loss of consciousness, worsening signs/symptoms, and/or post-concussive signs/symptoms lasting greater than 24 hours will be referred to a physician and will not be allowed to return to activity until cleared by the physician.

**Return to Activity.** Student-athletes suffering a concussion must be sign/symptom free at rest for a minimum of 24 hours before starting any exertional activity. Student athletes will complete the following protocol in sequence before returning to full activity. The student athlete must remain sign/symptom free for 24 hours following each step before progressing to the next step. If signs/symptoms occur during a step, the student-athlete will revert back to the previous step for a minimum of 24 hours before attempting the progression again.

**Step 1:** Aerobic Exercise/Agility Drills

**Step 2:** Non-Contact Sport Specific Activity

**Step 3:** Full Competitive Practice

**Step 4:** Game/Competition

**Multiple Concussions.** Any student-athlete suffering three or more concussions within the same calendar year will not be eligible to return to activity until evaluated and cleared by a physician.