|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **GSC_Logo-400** | **Concussion Policy**  **(Effective: January 1, 2019)** | **skatecan_colour** |

The Province of Ontario passed legislation to enact *Rowan’s Law* (Concussion Safety) on March 7, 2018. Rowan’s Law mandates that sports organizations to: establish a Concussion Code of Conduct (or “Policy”) as well a separate Removal-from-Sport / Return-to-Sport protocol (or “Policy”). The Goulbourn Skating Club (GSC) is committed to maintaining the health and safety of its athletes, coaches and officials and believes that their health is of paramount importance. The GSC recognizes the potential danger and long-term health consequences of this often difficult to diagnose form of traumatic brain injury. This Policy has been developed as required by Rowan’s Law and is intended to provide easy-to-understand guidelines related to individuals who have been diagnosed with or are suspected of having a concussion.

**A CONCUSSION (is)**:

* a brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g. headaches, dizziness), cognitive (e.g. difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioural (e.g. depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g. drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep);
* may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull;
* can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness);
* cannot normally be seen on X-rays, standard CT scans or MRIs.
* can result in symptoms that are immediately evident, or may evolve and persist over the course of hours, days or even months.

If the individual(s) responsible for those who are participating in the organized activity believes that, following a blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head may have caused a concussion, they must take immediate action.

If the participant is conscious after the trauma:

* The participant must be removed from the practice (on or off the ice), training, competition, camp or clinic as soon as it is safe to do so and immediately seek medical attention. – The participant shall not be left alone.
* Concussion Symptoms should be documented and may include but not limited to:

▪ Dizziness ▪ Headaches ▪ Nausea ▪ Neck Pain ▪ Sensitivity to light and noise ▪ Impaired balance and vision ▪ Difficulty concentrating or remembering ▪ General confusion ▪ Depression or irritability ▪ Drowsiness or difficulty falling asleep.

If the participant is unconscious as a result of a trauma occurred during a skating (or off-ice) activity:

* Dial 911
* Do not move the participant
* Wait for paramedics to arrive

Please note that children under the age of 12 may present with different concussion symptoms than those listed above.  Children may also require additional healing time, as their brains are still developing.

Sustaining a secondary concussion when not fully recovered from an initial concussion injury can be devastating/life-threatening.  This is referred to as “second impact syndrome.”

What to do if you **RECOGNIZE**/suspect someone has a concussion:

1. The skater must be safely **REMOVED** from the ice and evaluated onsite with standard emergency management principles, including consideration of cervical spine injury.
2. The skater must **seek medical attention** expediently and be assessed by a qualified medical professional (physician, physical therapist, athletic therapist) with experience in the assessment and management of concussion injury. If no healthcare provider is available on site (including international events) and the skater is exhibiting one or more of the symptoms listed under *Concussion Symptoms* above (must be assessed by the coach and/or team leader), the skater must be transferred to an Emergency Department or Urgent Care assessment center.
3. The skater should not be left alone following a concussion injury and should be monitored for deterioration over the initial few hours following the injury.
4. A skater diagnosed with a concussion will not be allowed to return to skate on the same day as the concussion injury. It must be recognized that the appearance of symptoms of concussion may be delayed several hours following a concussive episode. If the injured person is under the age of eighteen (18), the parents/guardian will be contacted immediately.
5. A skater must receive medical clearance by a concussion-trained health care professional before resuming on- or off-ice training.

Coaches are never to make the concussion determination in the field on their own.

**If there is any doubt as to whether a concussion has occurred, it is assumed that a concussion has occurred.**

The participant’s parent/guardian or emergency contact will be contacted and they will be required to have the injury properly assessed at a hospital or medical clinic.

Participants (whether on GSC ice or in another activity) who have suffered a concussion, or are suspected to have suffered a concussion, must undergo a medical evaluation, preferably by someone who is trained in concussion management, for diagnosis and guidance to determine the extent of the injury.

**At a minimum, this must be done by a recognized health care professional such as a family physician or other medical practitioner (i.e. nurse practitioner, sport and exercise medicine physician, sport physiotherapist, or athletic therapist).**

**A Return to Skate Form is required following ALL concussions, even those that did not occur while skating or participating in any form of off-ice activity run by the club. Return to Skate Forms are to be returned to the Primary Coach.**

* The form must be completed by a health care professional and considerations/restrictions with respect to returning to skate must be documented.
* The form must indicate that the individual is symptom-free and able to return to full participation in physical activity.

\*\*The GSC will not be held responsible for any future liabilities should the Parent/Guardian

of a skater who has a possible head injury, decide not to seek an opinion or treatment

from a physician or other medical professional (i.e. nurse practitioner).

*Personal information used, disclosed, secured or retained by the GSC will be held confidentially and safely for the purpose for which it is collected.*