

Sault Female Hockey Association Concussion Policy

Introduced: 2017

While we recognize that concussions cannot be fully prevented, education and training as well as prompt and appropriate management can better protect the health and well-being of our athletes, and potentially reduce the amount of playing time missed from subsequent concussions.

As such, **Sault Female Hockey Association** has partnered with Complete Concussion Management™ (CCMI), a leading concussion research group, to develop and implement an evidence-based concussion policy.

Policy

1. All Reps athletes 8 years old and up are required to have completed a comprehensive baseline test through any Complete Concussion Management clinic prior to participation in any practice or game. It is recommended that all House League athletes 8 years old and up, and strongly recommended that all Bantam and Midget House League athletes also complete a comprehensive baseline test.
 - a. Baseline tests are valid for 1 full calendar year. Athletes must present proof of completion of a baseline test that will remain valid throughout the upcoming season in order to be accepted. If your baseline test is set to expire during the sporting season, you may be required to take a re-test to ensure validity throughout the season.
 - b. To find a clinic in your area please visit www.completeconcussions.com/find-a-clinic. Please contact your local clinic and indicate that you would like to register your team or athlete for baseline testing.
2. All Coaches and Trainers must complete the CCMI Concussion *Sideline Course* and download the accompanying *Concussion Tracker* Smartphone Application. This can be completed at www.completeconcussions.com.
3. If a concussion is suspected, whether occurring as a part of **Sault Female Hockey Association** or otherwise, the athlete is to be removed immediately from all practices and/or games and not permitted to return until cleared by a CCMI trained practitioner or through the *Concussion Tracker* Smartphone Application.
 - a. All suspected concussions must be reported through the Concussion Tracker Smartphone Application by a coach/trainer.

- b. All suspected concussions should be encouraged to see their primary care physician or make an appointment at the nearest CCMI clinic as soon as possible to receive a proper diagnosis and begin the *Return-to-Play* process. If any red flags are suspected the athlete should immediately visit the nearest emergency department.

4. **Sault Female Hockey Association Return-to-Play Process:**

Each stage must be separated by at least 24 hours and the athlete must be completely symptom-free at each stage prior to progressing to the next stage. If symptoms are experienced at any stage, the athlete is to drop back to the previous stage for a period of 24 hours and be symptom-free at that stage prior to attempting the next stage again. Any stage below marked with ** indicates that this stage must be completed under the supervision of a CCMI trained practitioner.

Stage 1 – Symptom limited rest **

Once the athlete has received a diagnosis of concussion from a trained CCMI practitioner, the first step is symptom limited cognitive and physical rest. At this stage, it is important that the athlete not engage in any physical or cognitive activity that may provoke symptoms or increase the risk of a secondary injury.

Stage 2 – Light ‘Cognitive’ Activity

“Cognitive” means mental. At this stage, the athlete should begin incorporating short periods of light reading, homework, TV viewing, etc. If the athlete can tolerate 1 hour of light cognitive activity without increasing symptoms, progress to stage 3 the following day.

Stage 3 – Half-Day of School with Modifications

The athlete is now permitted to attend a half-day of school with modifications. Typical modifications include but are not limited to: No tests, No gym, No homework, No music class, Frequent breaks etc. If the athlete can complete a half-day of school without increasing symptoms, progress to stage 4 the following day.

Stage 4 – Full Day of School with Modifications

The athlete is now permitted to attend a full day of school. If the athlete can complete a full day of school without increasing symptoms, progress to stage 5 the following day.

Stage 5 – Light Physical Activity **

This stage incorporates the addition of light physical exertion to see how your brain responds to an increased demand for blood flow. You will need to book an appointment with a CCMI practitioner to complete this stage. Dress in athletic attire and be required to complete 20-30 minutes of clinician supervised physical activity while your heart rate and blood flow are monitored.

Stage 6 – Non-Contact Practice – Phase I (Low Intensity)

The athlete is now permitted to return to sport specific activity with the team in a NON-CONTACT format and administered by a coach/trainer. The athlete will be asked to complete various simple “sport-specific” drills that do not involve contact or the chance of contact. These drills will be individually based and will involve fairly low physical stress.

A list of suggested drills for every sport can be found in the concussion tracker app by selecting Profile → Team → the athlete in question → select a sport from the dropdown menus to view drills.

Stage 7 – Non-Contact Practice – Phase II (Higher Intensity)

This stage will once again be administered by your coach and/or trainer. The athlete is now permitted to take place in ‘dryland’ training and weight training. Sport-specific drills can now be conducted at higher intensity and be more *team-based* (3-man weave, breakouts, etc.). At this stage, athletes are still NOT permitted to participate in any drills that involve contact or that have the chance for potential contact.

As in stage 6, lists of suggested drills can be found in the coach/trainer smartphone app by selecting Profile → Team → the athlete in question → select a sport from the dropdown menus to view drills.

Stage 8 – Blackhawks Protocol and Re-Testing of Baseline **

This stage will require you book an appointment with a trained CCMI practitioner. The Blackhawks protocol is an intensive physical exertion protocol that challenges the athlete’s cardiovascular system as well as their balance (vestibular system) and assesses their readiness to return to full athletic competition. Upon successful completion of the Blackhawks program, the athlete will immediately undergo full re-testing of all baseline

parameters to assess every area of neurological function to determine if the athlete has reached full brain recovery.

Stage 9 – Full Practice

Upon successful completion of stage 8, it is strongly encouraged that you participate in at least 1 practice at full intensity, including contact drills, prior to participating in a game.

Stage 10 – Full Game-Play

Sault Female Hockey Association has formed a collaborative partnership with Complete Concussion Management Inc. because they are the leaders in concussion management for amateur and professional sports associations across Canada. All protocols and stages are based on the most current scientific research and this policy has been enacted to help keep our athletes safe. This policy is subject to revisions as new research emerges.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors,
Sault Female Hockey Association