

# Canadian Blind Sports Association

## CONCUSSION POLICY

The Canadian Blind Sports Association (the 'Organization') and its Participating Members are committed to ensuring the safety of those participating in all blind sports and the sport of Goalball. The Organization and its Participating Members recognize the increased awareness of concussions and their long-term effects and believe that prevention of concussions is paramount to protecting the health and safety of Individuals.

### Preamble

1. This Policy is based on the 5<sup>th</sup> Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport that was released in April 2017. This Policy interprets the information contained in the report that was prepared by the 2017 Concussion in Sport Group (CISG), a group of sport concussion medical practitioners and experts, and adapts concussion assessment and management tools.
2. The CISG suggested 11 'R's of Sport-Related Concussion ("SRC") management to provide a logical flow of concussion management. This Policy is similarly arranged. The 11 R's in this Policy are: Recognize, Remove, Re-Evaluate, Rest, Rehabilitation, Refer, Recover, Return-to-Sport, Reconsider, Residual Effects, and Risk Reduction.
3. A concussion is a clinical diagnosis that can only be made by a physician or nurse practitioner. The Organization and its Participating Members accept no liability for Individuals in their use or interpretation of this Policy.

### Definitions

4. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
  - a) "*Individuals*" – Refers to all categories of participation with the Organization and its Participating Members, whether employed by, contracted by, registered in, or engaged in activities with, the Organization or a Participating Member including, but not limited to, employees, contractors, athletes, coaches, instructors, officials, volunteers, administrators, and Directors and Officers.
  - b) "*Participating Members*" – Includes Provincial, Territorial, and Multi-sport organizations who govern the sport of Goalball and/or who provide support for all Canadians who are blind/visually impaired to be involved in a range of sports, and who elect to adopt this policy.
  - c) "*Sport-Related Concussion ("SRC")*" – A sport-related concussion is a traumatic brain injury induced by biomechanical forces. Several common features that may be used to define the nature of a SRC may include:
    - i. Caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an impulsive force transmitted to the head.
    - ii. Typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurological function that resolves spontaneously. However, in some cases, signs and symptoms evolve over a number of minutes to hours.
    - iii. May result in neuropathological changes, but the acute clinical signs and symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than a structural injury and, as such, no abnormality may be visibly apparent
    - iv. Results in a range of clinical signs and symptoms that may or may not involve loss of consciousness. Resolution of the clinical and cognitive features typically follows a sequential course. However, in some cases symptoms may be prolonged.
  - d) "*Suspected Concussion*" – the recognition that an individual appears to have either experienced an injury or impact that may result in a concussion or is exhibiting unusual behaviour (signs and symptoms) that may be the result of concussion.

### **Purpose**

5. The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance in identifying common signs and symptoms of a concussion, protocol to be followed in the event of a suspected concussion and return to participation guidelines should a concussion be diagnosed. Awareness of the signs and symptoms of concussion and knowledge of how to properly manage a concussion is critical to recovery and helping to ensure the individual is not returning to physical activities too soon, risking further complication.

### **Application of this Policy**

6. This Policy applies to all Individuals, as defined above.
7. This Policy applies to interactions between Individuals during the events and activities of the Organization and its Participating Members including, but not limited to, competitions, practices and training, treatment or consultations (i.e., massage therapy), camps and clinics, travel associated with the activities of the Organization or a Participating Member, and any meetings.
8. The policy recognizes certain jurisdictions across Canada have legislation that govern the management of concussions within their jurisdiction. Government legislation supersedes this Policy.

### **Renewal**

9. This Policy will be reviewed annually by the board of Canadian Blind Sports Association and updated based on the most up-to-date, evidence-based best practice in concussion policy.

### **Awareness**

10. This Policy and the Concussion Awareness Procedures outlined in the [Canadian Blind Sports Association Concussion Protocol](#) will be implemented by the Organization and its Participating Members.

### **Recognizing Concussions**

11. The procedures outlined in the Head Injury Recognition section of the Canadian Blind Sports Association Concussion Protocol should be implemented when a concussion is suspected.

### **Removal from Sport Protocol**

12. In the event of a Suspected Concussion where there are **any observable signs** of a concussion, the individual indicates they have any **symptoms** of a concussion, or the individual fails to correctly answer memory assessment **questions on the CRT5**, the Individual should be immediately removed from participation by designated personnel and not be allowed to return to play that day.
13. The Onsite Medical Assessment Protocol outlined in the Canadian Blind Sports Association Concussion Protocol should be implemented. The Individual should not be left alone and should be seen by a physician as soon as possible.
14. An Individual who has been removed from participation due to a suspected concussion should not return to participation until the Individual has been assessed medically, preferably by a physician who is familiar with the [Sport Concussion Assessment Tool – 5<sup>th</sup> Edition \(SCAT5\)](#) (for Individuals over the age of 12) or the [Child SCAT5](#) (for Individuals between 5 and 12 years old), even if the symptoms of the concussion appear to resolve.

### **Re-Evaluate**

15. An Individual with a Suspected Concussion should be evaluated by a licensed physician or nurse practitioner as per the Medical Assessment Procedure outlined in the Canadian Blind Sports Association Concussion Protocol.

### **Rest and Rehabilitation**

16. Individuals with a diagnosed SRC must follow the Concussion Management Procedures outlined in the Canadian Blind Sports Association Concussion Protocol to return to sport safely.
17. Individuals must consider the diverse symptoms and effects associated with SRCs. Rehabilitation programs that involve controlled parameters below the threshold of peak performance should be considered.

### **Refer**

18. Individuals who display persistent post-concussion symptoms (i.e., symptoms beyond 10-14 days for adults and four weeks for children) should be referred to a physician with experience handling SRCs, as per the Multidisciplinary Concussion Care procedure in the Canadian Blind Sports Association Concussion Protocol.

### **Recovery and Return to Sport/Work/School**

19. The signs and symptoms of SRC usually last one to four weeks, but may last longer. In some cases, it could take weeks or months to fully heal.
20. The Return-to-Sport procedures outlined in the Concussion Management section of the Canadian Blind Sports Association Concussion Protocol must be implemented for all athletes to return to participation safely.
21. The Return-to-Work procedures outlined in the Concussion Management section of the Canadian Blind Sports Association Concussion Protocol should be implemented for athletes that work.
22. The Return-To-School procedures outlined in the Concussion Management section of the Canadian Blind Sports Association Concussion Protocol should be implemented for athletes in school. Please note: student athletes must return to school full-time prior to making a full return to sport (i.e., stage 5 and 6 of the Return-To-Sport protocol).

### **Reconsider**

23. All Individuals, regardless of competition level, should be managed using the same SRC management principles.
24. SRC symptoms in children may persist for up to four weeks. Children and adolescents should first follow a Return-to-School strategy before they complete stage 5 and 6 of the Return-to-Sport strategy.

### **Residual Effects**

25. Individuals should be aware of potential long-term effects of concussion and if symptoms persist or return after medical clearance, the Individual should be referred to a physician who is an expert in the management of concussion.

### **Risk Reduction and Prevention**

26. The risk of concussions occurring may be reduced by the proper implementation of prevention strategies:
  - a) *Concussion awareness and education* – Canadian Blind Sports will make concussion awareness resources available on its public website, including this Policy and related protocols.
  - b) *Safe participation environment* – Canadian Blind Sports-sanctioned event and activity venues will be properly prepared and free of hazards.
  - c) *Fair play and respect for opponents* – These ethical values will be encouraged in all activities.
  - d) *Athlete's Clinical History* – The Organization and its Participating Members recognize that knowing an Individual's SRC history can aid in concussion management and the Return-to-Sport strategy. The

clinical history should also include information about all previous head, face, or cervical spine injuries. The Organization and its Participating Members encourage Individuals to make team medical personnel, coaches and other stakeholders aware of their individual medical histories.

- e) *Helmets/Youth Physical Contact* – Where applicable, the Organization and its Participating Members will strongly enforce its helmet policies and will limit physical contact between Individuals under the age of 13.

#### **Reporting and Surveillance**

- 27. Canadian Blind Sports Association will use the Incident Report to record the details of the injury incident to the Head Office. The report will record the date, time, location, and describe the mechanics of the incident.

#### **Non-Compliance**

- 28. Failure to abide by any of the guidelines and/or protocols contained within this Policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Organization's or its Participating Members' *Discipline and Complaints Policy*.