

Concussion Management Policy

Policy Name: Concussion Management Policy

Policy Number: 111OCC2014	Document Type: Policy	Effective Date: December 2014
---------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------------

Last Reviewed: December 2021	Next Review: December 2024
------------------------------	----------------------------

Applicable Legislation:

This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if required by the organisation. The review will ensure it reflects both the community expectations and all legal requirements.



Purpose Statement

Volleyball WA (VWA) Concussion Management Policy has been introduced to reduce the risk and inform all individuals on the management of concussion to participants involved in all VWA activities, events, and competitions.

The policy also contains guidance to assist participants, coaches, & officials in managing concussion.

This Policy is not intended to be a medical document.

Policy Application

This policy applies to all VWA employees, contractors, volunteers, and members and all other people or organisations which by agreement or otherwise, are bound to comply with this policy.

This policy applies to behaviour occurring during VWA business, activities, competitions, and events.

Definitions

The following definitions are listed to provide clarity for this policy.

- **Concussion** is a traumatic brain injury induced by biomechanical forces to the head or anywhere on the body, which transmits an impulsive force to the head. It causes short-lived neurological impairment, and the symptoms may evolve over the hours or days following the injury.
- **Concussion Aware** is a person who has had training or a good understanding of how to recognise and provide appropriate first aid to a person who may have a concussion.
- **Participant** is the individual participating in a VWA activity, event, or competition.

Background

Sport-related concussion is a growing health concern in Australia. It affects participants at all levels of sport, from the part-time recreational participant to the full-time professional. Concerns about the incidence, and possible health ramifications for participants, have led to an increased focus on the importance of diagnosing and managing the condition safely and appropriately. Participant safety and welfare is paramount when dealing with all concussion incidents.

Concussion is difficult to diagnose, and only medical doctors can definitively diagnose a concussion. However, recognising a suspected concussion at the time of injury is extremely important to ensure appropriate management and to prevent further injury. The Concussion in Sport Australia Position Statement (2019) recommends, "If in doubt, sit them out."

Recovery from concussion varies from person to person and injury to injury. The symptoms should resolve without medical intervention. The main treatment is rest, followed by a gradual return to activity.

Policy Statement

Volleyball WA takes the risk of concussion in the sport very seriously. Participants, parents, coaches, and officials need to act in the best interest of the participants' safety, and the general rule of 'If there is any doubt, sit them out' will apply at all times.

Management

- First aid principles apply in managing a participant with a suspected concussion.
- Any participant suspected of having concussion will need to be removed from playing or training and not be allowed to return that day.
- In addition, any participant suspected of having concussion needs to be assessed and cleared by a medical practitioner before returning to sport.
- A concussed participant must not return to volleyball for a minimum of 14 days from when symptoms cease, provided they can supply VWA with a medical clearance certificate to return to sport activities without restrictions.

Several applications are available to support non-medical personal to recognise the signs and symptoms of concussion, such as the Head Check APP/Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool (www.headcheck.com.au).

Sports Australia recommends using the Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5) to help recognise the signs and symptoms of concussion.

<https://bjism.bmj.com/content/bjsports/early/2017/04/26/bjsports-2017-097508CRT5.full.pdf>

It is recommended that every VWA team has a person who is first aid trained and/or concussion aware of being responsible for the health and wellbeing of their participants.

Education

To improve the recognition of symptoms and management of concussion, VWA will provide opportunities for education to employees, contractors, volunteers, participants and parents, coaches, and referees.

Participants need to have a good understanding of concussion to appreciate the importance of reporting symptoms, complying with rest, and returning to sport advice.

Recognising Concussion

Recognising concussion can be difficult. The symptoms and signs are variable, non-specific and may be subtle. Onlookers should suspect concussion when an injury results in a knock to the head or body that transmits a force to the head. A hard knock is not required, concussion can occur from minor knocks. There may be obvious signs of concussion such as loss of consciousness, brief convulsions or difficulty balancing or walking. However, the signs of concussion can be more subtle.

The Sport Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT5) identifies 22 possible symptoms:

- headache
- 'don't feel right.'
- 'Pressure in the head.'
- difficulty concentrating
- neck pain
- difficulty remembering
- nausea or vomiting
- fatigue or low energy
- dizziness
- confusion
- blurred vision
- drowsiness
- balance problems - sensitivity to light
- more emotional
- sensitivity to noise
- irritability
- feeling slowed down
- sadness
- feeling like 'in a fog'
- nervous or anxious
- trouble falling asleep (if applicable)

First Aid Principles

The Concussion Management Policy adheres to the following first-aid principles:

Recognise, Remove & Refer

Recognising a concussion is critical to ensure appropriate management and prevent further injury. The signs and symptoms are variable and can present differently depending on the person's age. However, one should suspect a concussion when an injury is sustained from a knock to the head or body that transmits force to the head.

- When a participant is suspected of having a concussion, standard first aid principles still apply, and a systematic approach to the assessment of DRSABC (Danger, Response, Send for Help, Airway, Breathing, Circulation) should apply in all instances.
- A participant suspected of a concussion should be assessed by a suitable qualified first aider initially on site.
- Always follow the following guiding principle **"If there is any doubt, sit them out."**
- When the assessment has been completed, and it's deemed the person may have a concussion, the participant should be instructed to seek appropriate medical assistance by a medical practitioner.
- Participants with a suspected concussion should not be left alone, should not drive a motor vehicle, and should not consume alcohol. The participant must also be in the care of a responsible person who is aware of the concussion.
- If there is any doubt about whether a participant has suffered a concussion, that participant should not be allowed to return to sport on that same day.
- If at any time there is any doubt, the participant should be referred to hospital for an immediate assessment.

The Unconscious Participant

- If the participant suffers a serious injury and/or is unconscious, standard first aid principles still apply, and a systematic approach to assessment of DRSABC (Danger, Response, Send for Help, Airway, Breathing, Circulation) should apply in all instances.
- Treat all unconscious participants as though they have a spinal injury.
- An unconscious participant must ONLY be moved by personnel trained in spinal immobilisation techniques.
- Urgent hospital care is necessary if there is concern regarding the risk of structural head or neck injury – call 000.
- Participants displaying any of the following should be referred to hospital urgently.
 - Loss of consciousness or seizures
 - Persistent confusion
 - Double vision
 - Deterioration after being injured – increased drowsiness, headache or vomiting
 - Report of neck pain or spinal cord symptoms – numbness, tingling, muscle weakness
 - Child
 - Personal medical history of bleeding disorder/clotting disorder
 - Personal history of regular medication use that could result in prolonged bleeding (e.g., Warfarin, Aspirin).

Return to Volleyball

Managing concussion is a shared responsibility between the participant, coach, sports trainer, parents, and medical practitioner. The participant's safety is of the utmost importance and must not be compromised.

As such, the following principles will apply.

- The return to sport/school/work must be made with the assistance of a medical practitioner.
- A player who has suffered a concussion should return to sport gradually.
- All participants must be honest, and if they experience symptoms when they have returned to volleyball, they must notify a responsible person, refrain from participation, and seek medical attention.
- Participants should not return to play until they have returned to school/work.
- A concussed participant must not return to volleyball for a minimum of 14 days from when symptoms cease, provided they can supply VWA with a medical clearance certificate to return to sport activities without restrictions.

Policy Breaches

VWA will take all breaches of the policy seriously and will ensure they are dealt with promptly, sensitively, and confidentially.

Disciplinary action may be taken against a person who is found in breach of this policy, in accordance with the Complaints Management Procedure.

If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed, the appropriate authorities will be contacted for advice and guidance.

Control

Version History

Date	Version number	Executive Summary of changes
December 2014	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This policy was adopted at the December VWA Board Meeting.
April 2019	2.0	
December 2021	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Policy updated onto new template.Amended to align with the Sport Australia - Concussion in Sport Position Statement 2019.

Appendix & Relevant Procedures

- VWA acknowledge the use of phrasing obtained from the 'Concussion in Sport Australia Position statement' updated in 2019.
- Concussion in Sport Australia Position statement (2019)
- Sports Medicine Australia <https://sma.org.au/resources-advice/concussion/>
- Head Check www.headcheck.com.au
- Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5)
- <https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/>