



AHJFA Concussion Position Statement

Key point :

AHJFA recommends junior players do not return to contact training or play for **at least 2 weeks** after resolution of all symptoms of Concussion, and **at least 3 weeks** after suffering Concussion.

“IF IN DOUBT , SIT THEM OUT”

Background :

There is an increasing understanding of the long term effects of Concussion on athletes of all ages.

Recent guidelines published by the Australian Institute of Sport (February 2024) recommend that junior athletes do not return to contact training or play for at least 2 weeks after resolution of all symptoms at rest, and do not return to contact play for at least 3 weeks after an episode of Concussion.

Current guidelines by the Football Federation of Australia (2018) are at odds with this recommendation and recommend a minimum of 6 days before returning to play.

The AHJFA believes in taking a more conservative approach to Concussion management in the long terms interest of junior player's health.

Recommendations :

Please note these are recommendations only : they are not binding. The AHJFA will not actively enforce these recommendations.

The responsibility for managing a junior player's Concussion remains in the hands of individual families and their Clubs. The AHJFA does NOT require an official Medical Clearance form to be submitted to the AHJFA prior to a player's return to play after a Concussion Episode.

- ❑ Any Junior player suspected of suffering from Concussion should be immediately removed from the field of play (or training ground)
- ❑ The player should be assessed immediately by an adult (eg Coach , Team Manager or Parent) using the Concussion recognition Tool (“CRT 6”) and managed accordingly. The CRT6 can be used for players of all ages.

NOTE : It is not the Referee's responsibility to diagnose or manage Concussion.

- ❑ A player suspected of suffering from Concussion should be formally assessed by a suitably qualified Health Professional , ideally using the SCAT 6 Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT 6)
- ❑ If Concussion is diagnosed , the player should not return to play or contact training for at least 2 weeks after all symptoms have resolved and for at least 3 weeks after the Concussion occurred

- ❓ Return to physical activity and training should be guided by the treating Health Professional, and can be based on a step wise program as outlined in the AIS resource listed.

The AHJFA strongly encourages Clubs to notify the Child Safety Officer of a Concussion Episode, who will add the players' details to the **AHJFA Concussion Register**. The AHJFA believes this will be a valuable process for gathering and recording Concussion Episodes in a junior player for future reference.

AHJFA March 2024

References

- Sports Medicine Australia Concussion statement Release :
sma.org.au/new-concussion-guidelines-launched-today
- AIS recommendations
www.concussioninsport.gov.au
- Current guidelines from Football Australia (January 2018)
[w.footballaustralia.com.au/sites/ffa/files/2018-01/18-0102%20FFA%20Concussion%20Guidelines%20\(final\).pdf](http://w.footballaustralia.com.au/sites/ffa/files/2018-01/18-0102%20FFA%20Concussion%20Guidelines%20(final).pdf)

Resources :

- Concussion Recognition Tool "CRT 6 "
sma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Concussion-Recognition-Tool-CRT6.pdf
- Sport concussion Assessment Tool "SCAT 6"
sma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/SCAT6.pdf
- Child SCAT 6 for children aged 5-12 :
sma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Child-SCAT-6.pdf
- Information for Medical Practitioners including guidelines on Returning to Training and Sport
www.concussioninsport.gov.au/medical_practitioners#minimum_criteria_for_removal_from_sport