

NCP AAA Concussion Management Policy 2019/20



The growth in knowledge of the potential impact of concussion injuries in recent years has prompted sports organizations across Canada to work with experts in healthcare to enhance the safety of athletes. The **North Central Predators AAA Hockey Association** has collaborated with **Sports Medicine**, the largest sport injury clinic in the region, and the **Complete Concussion Management Inc. Network**. Together, they have teamed up to create an integrated concussion strategy to enhance our player safety.

Complete Concussion Management Inc. (CCMI) analyzes leading research from global sources to develop best-in-class approaches to concussion care. Their evidence-based training programs and integrated healthcare technologies empower multidisciplinary teams to implement standardized care for those impacted by concussions. Their network and patient database enable large-scale research to advance concussion management and ultimately, the long-term health and well-being of concussion patients.

Sports Medicine follows the Canadian Concussion Collaborative (CCC) guidelines for a Concussion Clinic, and has been exceeding many of the recommendations since the program's inception. Along with a player's Family Physician, Sports Medicine provides multidisciplinary concussion care, management and treatment. A Sport Medicine Physician with experience in concussion management is available when athletes require further assessment and ongoing involvement regarding medical stability, trajectory of care, need for medical speciality referral and decisions on clearance to return to activity.

The NCP AAA policy has made it mandatory for all players with a suspected concussion to be seen by a physician for medical clearance, before returning to game play. This ensures players are receiving proper diagnosis and following a 10-step gradual return in a hockey-specific environment. These steps include a treadmill test, and an exertion test prior to medical clearance. If a Multimodal Test has been completed, one additional layer of risk management is utilized with objective comparative data. Multimodal Tests are functional scores that are objective, reliable and evidence-based and provide immediate feedback to the clinician. This testing is highly recommended for "At Risk" athletes, but is not mandatory.

Players are able to see their progress through clear guidelines in the return-to play-protocol, which outlines the recovery process into a series of steps. The goal of the process is to slowly add safe and manageable activity levels; gauging how a player responds at each step and progressively adding more if all goes well. This is done through, at a minimum, a light NON-contact practice, an intense NON-contact practice and a full contact practice before clearance.

The progressive concussion policy involved the collaborative work of our medical professionals, coaches, trainers, and families to make sure players were supported in every step of recovery so they could return to their favourite game safely, and ready to play. One of the critical pieces of the implementation process was the fact that all coaches and trainers are required to attend a workshop which provided education on how to prevent, identify, and manage concussions.

Players are directed to contact Sports Medicine, at 3285 Monarch Drive, Orillia when a suspected concussion occurs, and receive clearance for Return to Play. Sports Medicine can be contacted at 705-325-2200.