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HEALTH AND WELFARE

REGULATION

§8-58 Concussions In Student Athletes

A. Definitions

A “concussion” is a brain injury that is characterized by an onset of impairment of cognitive and/or physical functioning, and is caused by a blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head (i.e., a helmet to the head, being knocked to the ground). A concussion can occur with or without a loss of consciousness, and proper management is essential to the immediate safety and long-term future of the injured individual. A concussion can be difficult to diagnose, and failing to recognize the signs and symptoms in a timely fashion can have dire consequences.

Most athletes who experience a concussion can recover completely as long as they do not return to play prematurely. The effects of repeated concussions can be cumulative, and after a concussion, there is a period in which the brain is particularly vulnerable to further injury. If an athlete sustains a second concussion during this period, the risk of permanent brain injury increases significantly and the consequences of a seemingly mild second concussion can be very severe, and even result in death (i.e., “second impact syndrome”).

“Appropriate licensed health care provider” means a physician, physician assistant, osteopath or athletic trainer licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine; a neuropsychologist licensed by the Board of Psychology; or a nurse practitioner licensed by the Virginia State Board of Nursing.

“Return to play” means participate in a non-medically supervised practice or athletic competition.

B. Annual Concussion Training

Annual training on concussion management shall use one or more of the programs below:

- (i) The Centers for Disease Control’s (CDC) tools for youth and high school sports coaches, parents, athletes, and health care professionals provide important information on preventing, recognizing, and responding to a concussion, and are available at http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html. These include *Heads Up to Schools: Know Your Concussion ABCs*; *Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports*; and *Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports*.

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- (ii) The National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) online coach education course – *Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know*. This CDC-endorsed program provides a guide to understanding, recognizing and properly managing concussions in high school sports. It is available at www.nfhslearn.com.
- (iii) The Oregon Center for Applied Science (ORCAS) ACTive® course, an online training and certification program that gives sports coaches the tools and information to protect players from sports concussions. Available at <http://activecoach.orcasinc.com/> ACTive® is funded by the National Institutes of Health, developed by leading researchers, and validated in a clinical trial.

C. Standardized Assessments

Appropriate licensed health care providers or properly trained individuals evaluating student-athletes at the time of injury will utilize a standardized concussion sideline assessment instrument (e.g., SCAT II, SAC and BESS). Sideline Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT-II), the Standardized Assessment of Concussion (SAC) and the Balance Error Scoring System (BESS) are examples of sideline concussion assessment tools that test cognitive function and postural stability.

D. Concussion Management Team

The Concussion Management Team shall be appointed by the LCPS Athletic Director.

Legal References: § 22.1-271.5 of the Code of Virginia, Virginia Department of Education Guidelines

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