

Appendix 10.15 – SANFL Juniors Concussion Policy

SANFL Juniors Concussion Policy adopts the 2021 Management of Sport-Related Concussion in Australian Football Guidelines by the AFL. These guidelines provide best practice management of sport-related concussion to ensure the short and long-term welfare of all players in the SANFL Juniors competition.

It is an expectation that the guidelines are adhered to by all SANFL Juniors clubs, players, parents/caregivers, coaches, trainers, and any other stakeholders involved in the competition. These guidelines provide clear instructions on how to assess and manage any player who has suffered concussion or is suspected of having a concussion.

Concussion Guidelines:

In the early stages of injury, it is often not clear whether you are dealing with a concussion or there is a more severe underlying structural head injury. For this reason, the most important steps in initial management include:

1. Recognising a suspected concussion.
2. Removing the player from the game.
3. Referring the player to a medical doctor for assessment.
4. Where there is no medical doctor present to assess the player, or the diagnosis of concussion cannot be ruled out at the time of injury, the player must **NOT** be allowed to return to play in the same match / training session.

Any player who has suffered a concussion or is suspected of having a concussion must be medically assessed as soon as possible. The AFL-approved concussion management app HeadCheck (www.headcheck.com.au) should be utilised to recognise and assist in the management of any suspected concussion for players.

There should be an accredited first aider at every game and the basic rules of first aid should be used when dealing with any player who is unconscious or injured.

To ensure a player is ready to return to play, it is important that Schedule 2 in the guidelines document is referred to and followed for the phases of rest, recovery and return to play following concussion. These steps include:

1. A brief period of complete physical and cognitive rest (24-48 hours).
2. A period of symptom-limited activity (e.g., reading, walking) to allow full recovery.
3. A graded loading program (with monitoring).
4. Clearance by a medical doctor (prior to returning to competitive contact sport / full contact training sessions).

Players should not enter the graded loading program until they have recovered from their concussion. Recovery means that all concussion-related symptoms and signs have fully resolved (for at least 24 hours) at rest and with activities of daily living, and they have successfully returned to work or school, without restrictions.

The earliest that a player may return to play (once they have successfully completed a graded loading program and they have obtained medical clearance) is on the 12th day after the day on which the concussion was suffered.

For more information and to view the guidelines document, visit:

<https://www.afl.com.au/clubhelp/policies/health-and-safety/concussion-management>