



Alberta Deaf Sports Association (ADSA) – Concussion Management Policy

Effective Date: October 2025

Approved By: Alberta Deaf Sports Association Board of Directors

Review Date: Bi-annual by Executive Board

1. Purpose

The Alberta Deaf Sports Association (ADSA) is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all athletes, coaches, officials, and participants. This policy outlines how to recognize, respond to, and manage concussions to reduce the risk of further injury.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all ADSA-sanctioned activities, including practices, competitions, camps, and events involving athletes of all ages and levels.

3. Definition of Concussion

A **concussion** is a brain injury caused by a blow to the head, face, neck, or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. It can occur with or without loss of consciousness and may result in a variety of physical, cognitive, emotional, and sleep-related symptoms.

4. Recognizing a Concussion

Common signs and symptoms may include:

- Headache or pressure in the head
- Dizziness, balance problems, or blurred vision
- Nausea or vomiting
- Confusion or difficulty concentrating
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling slowed down, tired, or “foggy”
- Changes in mood or behaviour

Note: Because communication barriers can exist for Deaf and hard of hearing athletes, coaches and teammates should use **clear visual signals, written communication, or sign language interpreters** when checking for symptoms.

5. Removal from Sport

- Any athlete suspected of having a concussion **must be immediately removed from play**.
- The athlete **must not return** to play the same day, even if symptoms improve.
- The athlete should be evaluated by a **licensed healthcare professional** experienced in concussion management.

6. Medical Assessment and Documentation

- A **Concussion Assessment Form** should be completed by the coach or first aid provider at the time of injury.
- The athlete must provide **written medical clearance** from a healthcare professional before returning to any practice or competition.

7. Return-to-Play Protocol

Athletes must follow a **stepwise return-to-play process** supervised by a qualified healthcare professional:

1. **Rest** – Physical and cognitive rest until symptoms resolve.
2. **Light Activity** – Gentle activities like walking; no contact or risk of head impact.
3. **Sport-Specific Exercise** – Light drills without contact.
4. **Non-Contact Training** – More intense drills; no contact.
5. **Full Contact Practice** – Once cleared medically.
6. **Return to Competition** – After completing all previous steps without symptoms.

If symptoms return at any step, the athlete must stop and return to the previous symptom-free stage.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Athletes:

- Report any concussion symptoms immediately.
- Follow all return-to-play guidelines.

Coaches and Team Staff:

- Remove any athlete suspected of concussion.
- Communicate clearly using sign language, visual cues, or writing.
- Document incidents and ensure medical clearance before return.

Parents/Guardians (for youth athletes):

- Monitor recovery at home.
- Ensure healthcare follow-up and provide medical documentation.

ADSA:

- Provide annual concussion awareness training for coaches and staff.
 - Review this policy annually.
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9. Communication Accessibility

ADSA will ensure all concussion education, forms, and instructions are **accessible in American Sign Language (ASL) and written English or other language as required**, to promote clear understanding for Deaf and hard of hearing participants.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the ADSA Board or sooner if concussion guidelines from **Alberta Health** or **Sport Canada** are updated.

Approved by: Danielle Larocque

Title:President

Date: October 2025