

**FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY  
CONCUSSION POLICY AND PROCEDURE  
2010-2011**

**Definition:**

Concussion is defined as a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by traumatic biomechanical forces (1). Concussion may or may not result in a loss of consciousness and is often described as a “Traumatic Brain Injury” (TBI) or a Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI).

**Causes:**

Concussion may be caused by a direct blow to the head, face, neck, or elsewhere on the body with an “impulsive” force transmitted to the head (1).

**Symptoms:**

Following a Concussion a student-athlete may exhibit the following symptoms

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Blurred Vision
- Double Vision
- Ringing of the ears
- Inability to concentrate
- Fatigue “slowed down”
- Irritability
- Feeling in a fog
- Neck pain
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Confusion
- Trouble falling asleep
- Sadness
- Nervous or Anxiousness
- “pressure in head”

**NCAA Policy**

The NCAA mandates all Universities have a Concussion Management Plan on file in regard to the education, recognition, emergency care, long term care, and return to play of student-athletes who have concussion like symptoms listed above.

Student-athletes must also sign a statement issued by the Florida Atlantic University Athletics Department indicating that they have been educated on the signs and symptoms of a concussion and accept the responsibility of notifying a member of the sports medicine staff if they have any of the symptoms listed above.

**Initial Baseline Screening:**

The Florida Atlantic University Sports Medicine Staff will provide initial baseline testing during pre-participation physicals that will include the following.

- Symptom Checklist
- Cognitive and Physical Evaluation (SAC assessment)
- Balance Examination (double leg stance, single leg stance, tandem stance)

The Florida Atlantic University Sports Medicine staff will also provide baseline neuropsychological screening (impact test) at random or upon request to student-athletes participating in football, soccer, baseball, basketball, diving, and cheerleading.

**Once an Athlete Reports Symptoms:**

It is the responsibility of the FAU Sports Medicine Staff to provide the initial evaluation for an athlete with concussion like symptoms and act within the standard of care for an allied health care professional when evaluating, and managing student-athletes with concussion like symptoms. The following steps will be taken for student-athletes suspected of having a concussion.

- Removal from participation for the remainder of the day
- Symptom Scale
- Cognitive and Physical Evaluation (SAC assessment)
- Balance Examination (double leg, single leg stance, tandem stance)
- Referral to a team physician
- Referral to Emergency Room when necessary

**Managing a Post Concussed Athlete:**

Athletes who are suspected of having a concussion will be assessed by a member of the sports medicine team.

- Each athlete will receive a “Head Injury Warning Sheet” with guidelines for further action if needed after a suspected concussion.
- A parent or guardian will be notified by a member of the sports medicine staff
- The team physician will be notified by a member of the sports medicine staff
- Athletes will be monitored by a member of the sports medicine staff up to 1 hour after the initial injury for any increase in symptoms.
- Appropriate referral to the emergency room if needed

- Student-athletes will not be allowed to drive home after if a concussion is suspected, therefore it is appropriate for a roommate or family member to assist the injured athlete home when necessary.
- A member of the academic support staff must also be notified once a student-athlete is diagnosed with a concussion.

Symptoms will be managed by repeating a symptom checklist daily (SCAT form) and scored by adding the total number of both the severity and duration of the symptom scales together. **Student-athletes will be held out of all exertion until a minimum of 24 hours after reporting asymptomatic.** Evaluation of a concussed athlete will include SAC testing, balance testing, and when available neuropsychological testing. **Team Physicians will have the final return to play decision for any athlete diagnosed with a concussion.** Advancing an athlete back to play must be done based on the graduated “return to play” guideline seen below. Each Concussion may be different and the sports medicine staff and team physician may lengthen the return to play guideline based on other factors (concussion history, severity, and/or duration of symptoms, deficient balance testing, SAC, or cognitive scores) that may put an athlete at risk for an additional head injury.

#### **Graduate Return to Play Guidelines:**

Step 1) asymptomatic minimum of 24 hours

Step 2) asymptomatic after exertion

Step 3) Clearance by Team Physician

Step 4) Return to Practice / Competition