

Pre-Concussion Screening for School Athletes



Dear Coaches, Trainers, Parents, and Athletic Directors,

A common misconception is that football presents the most significant risk of concussions, although research indicates that as few as 13% of all concussions in the United States occur in high school football¹. Teenage and young adult males are significantly more likely to experience a concussion than other groups, with over 85% of their concussions occurring during sports². In fact, of the total number of head injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms in 2007, football accounted for roughly half the number that occurred from cycling, and only a third more than basketball³. A recent study found that more than 60% of college level soccer players reported concussion symptoms *during a single season*³. Hockey is the sport where athletes are most at risk, but there are many incidents in nearly every other sporting activity, including baseball/softball, track & field, gymnastics, other others.

Behavioral Resources and Institute for Neuropsychological Services, LLP (BRAINS, LLP) is working with schools in West Michigan to provide low-cost screening to athletes. This can include athletes participating in high risk activities such as baseball, soccer, hockey, basketball, cheerleading, and others.



The quickest and most effective method to evaluate the likeliness and severity of a concussion is through the use of pre-concussion screening, which provides a baseline for comparison following a head injury⁴. This comparison can then indicate areas of functioning that were likely affected and help to make recommendations for athletic participation and to develop a treatment plan for recovery.

If your school or team is interested in providing this service to athletes, we are happy to work with you to accommodate the team's schedule. Screenings take approximately 15 minutes per person and will be kept on file for future reference (screening is useful for 1-year). In the event of a concussion, we would then have information to compare pre – from post-injury results. BRAINS can send a clinician to your school, and screenings can be conducted before, during, or after practices.

There is a cost of \$15 per person.

For questions or to register for a Pre-Concussion Screening, please contact BRAINS at (616) 365-8920 or bbridges@brainspotential.com. Brad Bridges, MSW and Michael Wolff, PsyD will be co-coordinating the concussion screenings and post-concussive evaluations, as needed.

Location: B.R.A.I.N.S.
3351 Eagle Run Drive NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
www.brainspotential.com

¹ Standardized Assessment of Concussion (SAC): Manual for Administration, Scoring, and Interpretation, *Second Edition*. M. McCrea, Ph.D., J. Kelly, M.D., & C. Randolph, Ph.D.
² Gordon, K. E., Dooley, J. M., & Wood, E. P. (2006) Descriptive Epidemiology of Concussion. *Pediatric Neurology*, Vol. 34(5).
³ American Association of Neurological Surgeons (2006). <http://www.neurosurgerytoday.org>
⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/physicians_tool_kit.htm



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

These signs and symptoms may indicate that a concussion has occurred.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF

Appears dazed or stunned
Is confused about assignment or position
Forgets sports plays
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
Moves clumsily
Answers questions slowly
Loses consciousness (even briefly)
Shows behavior or personality changes
Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
Can't recall events after hit or fall

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

Headache or "pressure" in head
Nausea or vomiting
Balance problems or dizziness
Double or blurry vision
Sensitivity to light
Sensitivity to noise
Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Concentration or memory problems
Confusion
Does not "feel right"

ACTION PLAN

If you suspect that a player has a concussion, you should take the following steps:

1. Remove athlete from play.
2. Ensure athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform athlete's parents or guardians about the known or possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.
4. Allow athlete to return to play **only** with permission from an appropriate health care professional.

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

For more information and to order additional materials **free-of-charge**, visit:
www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports