



Biathlon Alberta Concussion Management Policy and Protocols

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROTOCOLS

Concussions in Biathlon are rare, but can occur while participating in biathlon and its associated activities. In biathlon athletes are especially vulnerable during dryland training, in particular roller skiing, and when cross training.

Biathlon Alberta is committed to maintaining the health of the community and believes that participating in the activities organized by Biathlon Alberta and its member clubs can lead to better health. Our activities, as do most physical activities, have a risk of concussion. Biathlon Alberta recognizes that concussions are a significant public health issue because of their potential short- and long-term consequences. Biathlon Alberta therefore enacts this policy and related protocols as tools to help prevent, recognize and properly treat concussions which may occur in our activities.

DEFINITIONS

(a) Concussion;

- Is a brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g. headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g. difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioral (e.g. depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g. drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep);
- May be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull;
- Can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness; and,
- Cannot normally be seen on x-rays, standard CT scans or MRIs

(b) Suspected Concussion means the recognition that an individual appears to have either experienced an injury or impact that may result in a concussion, or is exhibiting unusual behavior that may be the result of a concussion.

(c) Concussion Diagnosis means a clinical diagnosis made by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. It is critical that an individual with a suspected concussion be examined by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

CONCUSSION TRAINING POLICY

Applicants for a coaching position with Biathlon Alberta must have successfully completed the [NCCP "Making Head Way"](#) eLearning module. Proof of completion is required prior to any involvement with Biathlon Alberta programs.

**These Information Guidelines have been prepared for general informational purposes only. They are not intended to and do not constitute any medical advice and do not contain any medical diagnosis, symptom assessments or medical opinions.*

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CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

1) Identification

Identifying a suspected concussion can be done using the [“Concussion Recognition Tool”](#)

If during a competition, practice, training camp, dryland or on snow, an athlete sustains a direct or indirect force to the head and subsequently exhibits signs and symptoms and/or other functional changes consistent with a concussion, he/she is to be immediately removed from the activity. The supervising coach, or a medical official (should the injury occur during a biathlon competition) is responsible to ensure the athlete stops the activity.

Following their removal from the activity, any person suspected to have sustained a concussion, must not return to the training activity or competition the same day, and should be assessed by a medical doctor as soon as possible to determine the extent of the injury and to rule out further pathology.

Coaches/officials/athletes are never to make a concussion determination in the field on their own. (Please note this is not age dependent, all skiers, coaches, officials, and volunteers must be treated in the same fashion).

2) Return to Play

Individuals diagnosed with a concussion should follow their physician’s guidance as well as rest until they are symptom-free and should then begin a step-wise symptom-limited program with stages of progression like the [Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport – Graduated Return-to-Sport Strategy](#)

Concussion management and return-to-sport decisions should be multi-faceted and made on an individualized patient basis by the managing medical doctor. All athletes with a suspected or diagnosed concussion should receive written medical clearance by a medical doctor prior to returning to sport activities.

FURTHER CONCUSSION RESOURCES

[Parachute – Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport](#)

[Alberta Concussion Alliance](#)

[Coaching Association of Canada – Concussion Awareness](#)

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