

**British Columbia Football Officials Association**  
**Policy 5.0 Policy Title – BCFOA Concussion Awareness**  
**Creation Date: September 1, 2010**  
**Amendment Date: September 30, 2014**

**Background**

With the continued emphasis on safety of the student athlete **BCFOA** crews will implement a new procedure to reinforce this important topic. Players, coaches, medical personnel, and officials must all work together for the well-being of the student athlete. It is also important that BCFOA maintains a consistent procedure for dealing with suspected concussions. The following represents the procedure that should be followed by every crew working high school football games in the province of British Columbia.

The first question the referee will ask during the pre-game meeting with the head coach is, "**Do you have qualified health care personnel on your sidelines as per BCSSFA regulations?**" If the answer is yes, that person should be identified by the head coach. There is no requirement to see credentials. \*\*\* If the answer is "no" then the game will be forfeited and the officials must leave the field at the scheduled start time. The referee will report the forfeiture information to Vice President of High School by email [vp-high-school@bcfoa.ca](mailto:vp-high-school@bcfoa.ca)

The referee will then inform the head coach that if a player is removed from the game due to concussion signs or symptoms that prior to returning in the same game the referee must be informed verbally by the qualified health care personnel that the player is free of signs or symptoms of concussion.

**Note:** This can easily be done at the sideline without delaying the game between plays or during timeouts/intermissions.

Any player who leaves the game for a suspected concussion will have his name, number and team recorded by the crew members on their game card.

Prior to returning to the game the qualified health care personnel for that team will verify verbally with the referee that the player is free of signs and is not reporting any symptoms of concussion.

**Concussion awareness training**

All BCFOA high school officials will be asked to complete an online concussion awareness training program each year. This course is available free of charge on the web site [NFHSlearn.com](http://NFHSlearn.com). The course takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. Officials will receive an email with directions on how to take the online course. A sample of the email is below:

Dear Official:

We are giving you access to the NFHS Concussion in Sports - What You Need To Know course. We hope you can take the time to complete the course in its entirety.

License #: CONC0821545374

Step 1: To redeem your course with your license # you must first be registered and signed in to the site.

To register you can go to <http://www.nfhslearn.com/registration.aspx>. If you are already registered, please go to <http://www.nfhslearn.com/> to sign in.

Step 2: Once you have signed in, visit your homepage by clicking on the "My Homepage / Courses" link.

Step 3: Click on the "Redeem License" button on your homepage, found in the box just below the "My Available Courses" box.

Step 4: Enter the License # above into the box and click "Submit". Once you have successfully redeemed your license you may now launch the course from your homepage.

NOTE: License numbers are a blend of letters and numbers. If your license is not accepted on the first try, please check to make sure you have entered it correctly (the letter "O" is often mistaken for the number "zero").

Thank you

NFHS

After taking the course officials will receive an online certificate of completion which can be printed if desired. The BCFOA VP for high school will also receive a copy of the certificate to confirm that the official has taken the course.

**IMPORTANT: OFFICIALS ARE NOT TRAINED OR QUALIFIED TO TREAT CONCUSSIONS AND ARE ONLY TRAINED TO BE AWARE OF POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS. THIS TRAINING IS ONLY INTENDED TO PROVIDE TEAM PERSONNEL ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFYING A PLAYER WITH POTENTIAL CONCUSSION.**

## **Game Procedure**

According to BCSSFA policy regarding concussion, any player who shows signs, symptoms or behaviours associated with a concussion must be removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by appropriate health-care personnel.

All officials should observe players especially after contact to the head (i.e. helmet to helmet, helmet to knee, helmet to ground) and the player is down after the play. If at any time in the game officials notice a player showing signs and/or reporting symptoms of a possible concussion, the game will be stopped and team personnel notified. That player will be removed from the game and return only after the referee is advised by qualified health care personnel that he is symptom free. Under normal circumstances team personnel will be aware of a player displaying signs or symptoms of a possible concussion and respond appropriately. A player must be removed for at least one play if the game is stopped as a result of an injury and if in the official's opinion he has been removed for suspected concussion he cannot return until the referee is notified verbally by health care personnel that he is symptom free.

It is important to note that the officials do not need a coach's permission to remove a player for suspected concussion. It is the official's responsibility to remove the player if he suspects concussion and continue to have him removed if he continues to display symptoms. This is the extent of the official's responsibility.

**Signs and Symptoms of Concussion:** Concussion symptoms can occur immediately following a head injury or can develop hours or even days later.

**Signs:** Bystander can observe in a player who has suffered head trauma include the following:

- Awkward (uncoordinated) movements – Balance Problems
- Behaviour or personality changes (e.g., irritability)
- Dazed or stunned appearance
- Inability to respond (unresponsiveness) or answer simple questions (e.g., Do you know where you are?)
- Loss of consciousness
- Paleness (pallor)
- Post-traumatic amnesia (inability to remember events prior to or immediately following the injury)
- Slurred speech
- Vomiting

**Symptoms:** Player has to tell you what he is experiencing following head trauma include the following:

- Blurred vision
- Difficulty concentrating
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness
- Feeling faint, sluggish, lethargic, or confused

Headache  
Nausea  
Ringing in the ears