

## QUANTICO MIDDLE /HIGH SCHOOL

### Return to Play Protocol Following a Concussion:

The following protocol has been established in accordance to the National Federation of State High School Associations and the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Concussions in Sport, Aug 2009 and will be adhered to by all QM/HS coaches

**When an athlete shows ANY signs or symptoms of a concussion:**

1. The athlete will not be allowed to return to play in the current game or practice on the same day. Previously, athletes were allowed to return to play if their symptoms resolved within 15 minutes of the injury. Studies have shown us that the young brain does not recover quickly enough for an athlete to return to activity in such a short time. Concerns over athletes returning to play too quickly have led state lawmakers in Virginia and other states to pass laws stating that no player shall return to play following a concussion on that same day and the athlete must be cleared by an appropriate health-care professional before he or she are allowed to return to play in games or practices.
2. **If an athletic trainer (ATC) is not available onsite, coaches will use the “Concussion Sideline Checklist Card” to quickly assess the athlete’s symptoms and cognitive state. These cards are kept in each team’s medical kit for quick access during practices and games. Concussions should be suspected in the presence of any one or more symptoms.**
3. The athlete should not be left alone, and regular monitoring for deterioration is essential over the initial few hours following injury.
4. The athlete should medically be evaluated following the injury that day.
5. Return to play must follow a medically supervised stepwise process
6. Quantico Middle High School Athletic Policies require all head coaches to immediately notify parents/guardians the day when head injuries occur during practices and games.

The laws also mandate that coaches receive education on recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussion. Once an athlete no longer has symptoms of a concussion and is cleared to return to play by a health care professional knowledgeable in the care of sports concussions he or she should proceed with an activity in a step-wise fashion to allow the brain to re-adjust to exertion.

**On average the athlete will complete a new step each day. The return to play schedule should proceed as below following medical clearance:**

Step 1 (Day 1): No exertional activity until asymptomatic for seven consecutive days.

Step 2 (Day 2): Mandate clearance only after seven consecutive days of rest by a neurologist before resuming any athletic activity. If symptomatic, the athlete would drop back to step one.

Step 3 (Day 3): Light aerobic exercise such as walking or stationary bike, etc. No resistance training.

Step 4 (Day 4): Sport specific exercise such as skating, running, etc. Progressive addition of resistance training may begin.

Step 5 (Day 5): Non-contact training / skills drills

Step 6 (Day 6): Full contact training in practice setting following clearance from a health care professional knowledgeable in the care of sports concussions.

**If symptoms occur at any step, the athlete should cease activity and be re-evaluated by their health care provider.**