

# Management of Concussion in Sports

Guidelines for the management of concussion in sports have changed quite a bit over the past several years. The **Prague Guidelines**\* currently in use at the CNY Sports Concussion Center were formulated in November 2004 by an international panel of experts on sports concussion. Convened by the International Ice Hockey Federation, the International Olympic Committee, and the Federation Internationale de Football (FIFA), these experts met in Prague, Czech Republic and developed new guidelines based on the most up-to-date research. The complete summary and agreement statement from the Prague conference can be found at [http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en\\_report\\_926.pdf](http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_926.pdf).

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## Prague Guidelines for Return-to-Play after Sports Concussion

When a player shows **ANY** symptoms or signs of a concussion:

1. The player should **NOT** be allowed to return to play in the current game or practice.
2. The player should not be left alone, and regular monitoring for deterioration is essential over the initial few hours following injury.
3. The player should be medically evaluated following the injury.
4. Return to play must follow a medically supervised stepwise process.

The cornerstone of proper concussion management is rest until all symptoms resolve and then a graded program of exertion before return to sport.

*A player should never return to play while symptomatic.  
“When in doubt, sit them out!”*

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**Did you know.** . . The National Federation of High School Athletic Associations recently issued new guidelines for the management of sports concussion, and now recommend that any athlete removed from play due to head injury **must have medical clearance** before returning to practice or play.

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In contrast to previous grading systems used in sports concussion, the **Prague Guidelines** define a concussion as either **simple or complex**.

- **Simple Concussions** are those where loss of consciousness (if any) was less than one minute, and symptoms resolve without complication within 7-10 days. In such cases, apart from limiting playing and other activities while symptomatic, no further intervention is required during the period of recovery.
- **Complex Concussions** include those where there is prolonged loss of consciousness, symptoms or cognitive impairment last longer than 7-10 days, or there is a history of multiple concussions. In these cases, return to play should be managed by a multidisciplinary team, and formal neuropsychological testing (testing of attention, memory, etc.) should be considered.

**For more information, call the CNY Sports Concussion Center at (315) 464-8986.**

\*McCrary, P., Johnston, K., Meeuwisse, W., Aubry, M., Cantu, R., Dvorak, J., Graf-Baumann, T., Kelly, J., Lovell, M., & Schamasch, P. (2005). *Summary and Agreement Statement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Prague 2004*. *Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine*, 15 (2).