

Concussion Policy

Policies and Procedures

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Preamble

Nordiq Alberta (NA) is committed to maintaining the health of the community and believes that participating in the activities organized by Nordiq Alberta can lead to better health. Cross Country Skiing, as most physical activities, has an inherent risk of concussion. Nordiq Alberta recognizes that concussions are a significant public health issue because of their potential short- and long-term consequences. Nordiq Alberta, therefore, enacts this policy and related protocols as tools to help prevent, recognize, and properly treat concussions which may occur in our activities.

Nordiq Alberta will endeavor to have participants follow all treatment protocols, concussion action plan protocol and return to play protocols.

The proper treatment of a concussion is more important than participation in any sport/recreation/activity/work/school during the healing process.

Definitions

In this policy,

1. **Concussion** means the definition of concussion from the Consensus Statement, Zurich 2012 on concussion in sport:

Concussion is a brain injury and is defined as a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces.

In plain language, a concussion:

1. 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);
2. 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;
3. can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness); and,
4. cannot normally be seen on x-rays, standard CT scans or MRIs.

2. **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 concussion.
3. **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.

Stages of Concussion Management

a) Education

Nordiq Alberta will see that athletes, parents and team staff receive concussion education prior to the beginning of each season. Education must include the following topics:

4. Physiology of a concussion
5. Early recognition of signs and symptoms of a concussion
6. Sport injury culture
7. Sport and recreation-specific concussion prevention strategy
8. Concussion Action Plan (CAP) Protocol
9. Return to play (R2P) protocol following a concussion.

NA will make this material available through a variety of modalities: coaching courses, officials training, and seminars/webinars.

b) Prevention: Ensuring Safe Play - Concussion Prevention Strategies

Nordiq Alberta requires all activity within its purview to follow the rules of the game as laid out by the Nordiq Alberta Technical Package and that the rules will be consistently enforced in order to effectively ensure safe play. All Nordiq Alberta staff and participants will behave ethically at all times.

Prevention strategies are targeted at a primary, secondary and tertiary level.

- i. Primary prevention: Annual optional education, enforcement of rules laid out in NA's Technical Package.

- ii. Secondary Prevention: Officials education, assessment of suspected concussions onsite by medical personnel.
- iii. Tertiary Prevention: Reduce stigma and warrior attitudes towards head injuries.

c) Identification – Using the Concussion Action Plan (CAP)

Nordiq Alberta requires that a Concussion Action Plan (CAP) be available and implemented at all activities and events in case of a concussion or suspected concussion.

A Concussion Action Plan (CAP) will allow proper care for athletes when a suspected concussion occurs.

The CAP will provide appropriate direction to all individuals. [SEE CAP PROTOCOL].

d) Documentation of Incident

Nordiq Alberta will use the Nordiq Canada's Accident Report Form to record the details of the incident and the athlete's progression through the stages of concussion management.

There are several times throughout the duration of the concussion at which information needs to be documented:

- i. Time of injury- record and monitor all signs and symptoms for 48 hours following the injury.
(Note if **signs get worse and if any from the "red flag" symptoms show follow the emergency protocol**).
- ii. During recovery- record how much school/work/sport/recreation time has been missed, this is valuable for the athlete if they ever sustain another concussion.
- iii. Return to play- documentation needs to occur if the athlete has clearance from a medical doctor before returning to play. There should be documentation from the athlete that states he/she has successfully returned to school/work full time without recurrent symptoms as well as successfully exercise to exhaustion without recurrent symptoms.

e) Return to Play [SEE RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL]

Return to learn must be fully completed, the athlete must be in a full time school environment without physical activity before starting to return to play (if applicable). Ensure that after completing a step, wait 24 hours before moving to the next step. The athlete must be asymptomatic throughout this process, if symptoms do come back, wait 24 hours after symptoms have subsided and when returning, start at the step previous. This should be medically guided.

Stages of Concussion Management and Associated Documents

Education

1. Resources for Education of Players, Parents, Coaches and Team Staff

Prevention

2. **Sport and recreation**-specific Concussion Prevention Strategy

Identification

3. **Concussion Action Plan** (CAP)—Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport Guidelines

Management Procedures for a Diagnosed Concussion

4. **Return to Play Protocol** (R2P)— Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport Guidelines
5. Accident Report Form—*Nordiq Canada*