



Ohio High School Athletic Association
4080 Roselea Place, Columbus, Ohio 43214
Telephone: 614-267-2502; Facsimile – 614-267-1677
www.ohsaa.org

Girls Gymnastics Information for Coaches and Officials – Concussion Prevention and Management

The OHSAA has made a concerted effort to provide educational resources to member schools and contest officials on this vital topic of concussion management. Although the sport of gymnastics is a non-contact sport where the risk of concussion is most likely less than in contact/collision sports; nevertheless, there is some risk that a student could sustain a concussion. The following are resources that are currently available:

1. **Suggested Guidelines for Concussion Management in Sport** – a publication from the NFHS
<http://www.ohsaa.org/medicine/Suggested%20Guidelines%20for%20Concussion%20Management%20in%20Sports.pdf>
2. **Questions vital to diagnosing concussion** – Q& A and a video from an ESPN special on concussions -
<http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/e60/news/story?id=5162747>
3. **Concussion in Sports – What you Need to Know - A 20-minute course that is available at no cost to the user at www.nfhslearn.com. The course was designed for coaches, parents, officials and students to assist in recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussion and to take the appropriate steps to manage them. The OHSAA strongly suggests that schools include this course in the preseason meetings with coaches, parents and students. **To date more than 15,000 individuals across the United States have taken this course.****
4. **Centers for Disease Control – Resources to Prevent and Recognize Concussions** -
<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Concussion>
5. **Fact Sheets for Parents, Coaches and Athletes** - <http://www.ohsaa.org/medicine/ParentsFactsheet.pdf>
<http://www.ohsaa.org/medicine/CoachGuide%20on%20Concussion.pdf>; <http://www.ohsaa.org/medicine/AthleteFactsheet.pdf>

The OHSAA has adopted the following sports regulation that is applicable to all sports. It is mandatory that officials adhere to this regulation.

Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play (competition) until cleared **with written authorization** by an appropriate health care professional.

In Ohio, an “appropriate health care professional” shall be a **physician**, as authorized under ORC Chapter 4731 and includes both doctors of medicine (M.D.) and doctors of osteopathy (D.O.) and an **athletic trainer, licensed** under ORC Chapter 4755. The Association has not adopted any official form to be used by physicians or athletic trainers to authorize return to participation. The school and or the health care professional shall determine the form to be used. Please be advised that once the contest official has removed the player from a contest, the removal shall be noted on the score sheet, if one is used in that sport, and there is no further responsibility of that official to monitor this process. Such monitoring is the responsibility of the head coach in conjunction with health care professionals. The written authorization to return to play does not have to be provided to the official but shall be kept on file at the school.

Note: This information has been included in all preseason manuals for coaches and officials and posted to the respective sports and officiating pages of the web site. All high coaches and officials will hear about these changes at the mandatory rules interpretation meetings. The regulation will also appear in the General Sports Regulations of the OHSAA both in the 2010-11 Handbook and online.

It has come to our attention that some girls gymnastics officials may feel uncomfortable about enforcing this regulation. Recognizing that our officials are NOT medical personnel as defined in the regulation, their only responsibility is to recognize a situation that may have caused a student to sustain a head injury and then determine whether or not the student exhibits any of the signs of a concussion as stipulated in the regulation. At that point, the student is not longer eligible to compete for the rest of that day. It will then be the responsibility of the school coach and administration to insure that the student does not return to competition without the written clearance by either a physician (MD or DO) or licensed athletic trainer.

The OHSAA strongly encourages all schools to require coaches, parents and student-athletes to view the new NFHS “Concussion in Sport” course which is referenced in #3 above at the mandatory preseason meetings this school year. To assist you in that endeavor, the NFHS has provided these instructions:

Steps to access the FREE “Concussion in Sports – What you Need to Know” course:

1. Go to www.nfhslearn.com
2. Sign in with your e-mail and password if you have previously registered.
3. If you need to register, it will only take a couple of minutes. All users at www.nfhslearn.com must be registered with a unique e-mail address and password.
4. Toward the upper left-hand part of the screen, you will see the “Click to Access This Free Course” for “**Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know.**”
5. You can order licenses as an individual to take the course yourself OR you can purchase courses in bulk if you intend to distribute the courses to others (there is a limit of 99 licenses per any one order).
6. Note: You will need to click on “Save” once you have put the course(s) in your cart and before you can proceed to Checkout.
7. As you go through the process you will see that you are using the “purchasing process” that is standard for NFHS Coach Education courses. You are not being charged anything for the Concussion courses. You do have the ability to order other courses at the same time, and you will be asked for payment for those.
8. You can then start the course if you ordered as an individual or begin distributing the licenses if you ordered in bulk.
9. If necessary, refer to the form regarding distributing bulk licenses. It can be found in the Locker Room at www.nfhslearn.com.

The online concussion course is offered at no cost to the user. Once you have finished, you will be added to the database as having completed the course. The name of the individual completing the course will appear in the “Coach Search” feature as having completed this course along with any other courses completed at www.nfhslearn.com.

It has come to our attention that some girls gymnastics officials may feel uncomfortable about enforcing this regulation. Recognizing that our officials are NOT medical personnel as defined in the regulation, their only responsibility is to recognize a situation that may have caused a student to sustain a head injury and then determine whether or not the student exhibits any of the signs of a concussion as stipulated in the regulation. At that point, the student is not longer eligible to compete for the rest of that day. It will then be the responsibility of the school coach and administration to insure that the student does not return to competition without the written clearance by either a physician (MD or DO) or licensed athletic trainer.