Cerebral Concussion (MTBI)
Return to Play Protocol / Augustana College

The following return to play protocol will be utilized by the sports medicine staff of Augustana College with the management of a head injury. Athlete becomes unconscious – monitor time of unconsciousness. If 1-2 minutes, activate EAP and refer to hospital for CT scan and evaluation.

If athlete sustains head trauma, but did not lose consciousness, but has concussive symptoms – perform cognitive, neurological, physical exam. Based on examination – if athlete is symptomatic – remove from play and re-evaluate 20-30 minutes later.

If concussive symptoms are still present – determine if symptoms are getting worse with time – if yes – refer to hospital for CT scan and evaluation. If symptoms are still present – but symptoms are improving – remove from play and perform a SCAT3 assessment.

If the only symptoms are a headache and NO OTHER SYMPTOMS – exert athlete to determine if symptoms re-appear. If symptoms re-appear – no return to play – perform SCAT3 assessment. If symptoms do not re-appear and the athlete is asymptomatic at rest and after exertion – may be allowed to return to play.

If athlete was removed from play (practice or competition)...Re-evaluate the athlete the next day with cognitive, neurological and physical exam. Have athlete perform the ImPACT test and/or repeat the SCAT3 test.

If athlete is symptomatic and/or the ImPACT test shows deficiencies or changes from baseline test, he/she will need to be educated on importance of rest (both physical & mental). The team physician will interpret results of the ImPACT test and evaluate athlete and determine if academic accommodations need to be implemented. The Academic Support Services department will be contacted.

Athlete who was removed from activity must be asymptomatic at rest and repeat the ImPACT test before any activity is allowed. Team physician will advise Athletic Training Staff on activity level for the athlete and if academic accommodations are required.

Once the athlete is asymptomatic at rest and the follow-up ImPACT test shows improvement in cognitive function, he/she will participate in a gradual progression of activity. This includes light aerobic activity – to moderate activity (weights, modified practice) – to full non-contact practice – to full contact practice. ATC and/or MD will evaluate athlete to ensure that the athlete is successfully able to progress without any concussive symptoms. IF the athlete demonstrates a return of concussive symptoms – the athlete must REST (both physical and mental) until asymptomatic.

An athlete who demonstrates any loss of consciousness, amnesia, or balance disturbance will generally require a longer recovery.