

# VSI Concussion Management Policies and Procedures (DRAFT v 20190822)

## Policy

### 1 CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

- 1.1 VSI shall develop and maintain concussion management policies and procedures that meet or exceed the requirements of Virginia and North Carolina law and of USA Swimming.
- 1.2 Where local laws (eg, county or city government), local guidelines (eg, Virginia Board of Education, local boards of education, or facility rules) are more stringent than the respective state law or USA Swimming requirements, the more stringent laws, guidelines, or rules shall be followed.
- 1.3 Procedures shall be established to implement this policy and shall minimally describe the following elements:
  - A. The parties to whom the policies and procedures apply
  - B. The activities to which the policies and procedures apply
  - C. Required or recommended education and training
  - D. Return-to-play protocol
  - E. Required meet announcement language
  - F. Required meet referee training

## Procedures

### 2 CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

- 2.1 Definitions
  - A. An appropriate healthcare provider for evaluating a potential concussion and signing a release authorization is a licensed (1) physician, physician assistant, osteopath physician, or athletic trainer; (2) neuropsychologist; or (3) nurse practitioner.
- 2.2 The concussion management procedures apply to:
  - A. Practice sessions conducted by VSI-registered clubs regardless of the geographic location of the practice
  - B. VSI-sanctioned meets when the sanction is held by VSI or a VSI-member club
  - C. VSI-approved meets when the approval is held by VSI or a VSI-member club

## 2.3 Education and training

### A. Education of athletes

- (1) On an annual basis, each VSI-member athlete shall review concussion awareness information provided by the VSI Operational Risk Committee. Minimally, this information will describe the short- and long-term health and academic effects of concussions. After having reviewed this information, the athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian (a parent or guardian signature is recommended, but not required, for athletes 18 years of age and older) shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt, review, and understanding of such information. It shall be the responsibility of the VSI-member club to ensure that this requirement is met and to maintain copies of the signed statements.

### B. Education for coaches and officials

- (1) It is highly recommended that all VSI-member coaches and officials participate in concussion management training. The following free on-line courses are recommended:
  - (a) The CDC's (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) "HEADS UP to Youth Sports: Online Training" found at:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html>
  - (b) The NFHS's (National Federation of State High School Associations) online coach education course "Concussion in Sports—What you Need to Know" found at:  
<https://nfhslearn.com/courses?searchText=Concussion>

*[B(1), B(1)(a), and B(1)(b) shall automatically sunset on January 1, 2020, when the USA-S concussion training requirements go into effect. These sections shall be replaced by the following language: B(1) VSI-member coaches and officials shall comply with all concussion management training requirements as specified by USA Swimming.]*

- (2) When practices or competition use aquatic facilities located on public school property located in the state of Virginia, coaches and officials using those facilities shall annually complete a concussion management training courses listed in this section. The following free on-line courses are recommended:
  - (a) The CDC's (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) "HEADS UP to Youth Sports: Online Training" found at:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html>
  - (b) The NFHS's (National Federation of State High School Associations) online coach education course "Concussion in Sports—What you Need to Know" found at:  
<https://nfhslearn.com/courses?searchText=Concussion>
- (3) When a copy of the concussion management training certificate obtained by a VSI-member coach or official is sent to the VSI Business Office, the completion date will be recorded in the member's membership profile.

*[B(3) shall automatically sunset on January 1, 2020, when the USA-S concussion training requirements go into effect.]*

2.4 VSI-member clubs shall proactively develop a concussion management communications plan that minimally contains the following elements:

- A. Timely notification of the athlete's parents or guardians of a suspected head injury or concussion, whether or not the evaluation showed signs of a possible concussion. In the event that a concussion is suspected, the notification shall include information on the requirements for evaluation by a licensed health care provider and the need for a signed release authorization from a licensed health care provider in order to return to practice and competition. In the event that a concussion is not suspected, the notification shall include information on the signs and symptoms of a concussion and the need to seek immediate medical attention if the athlete exhibits any signs or symptoms of a concussion.
- B. Timely notification of the athlete's club administrative and coaching structure of the suspected head injury or concussion to ensure that the athlete does not return to practice or competition with a coach who has not been informed of the suspected concussion and until a signed release authorization has been received from a licensed healthcare provider.

2.5 Procedures to be followed if a concussion is suspected:

- A. If an athlete is suspected by a parent, coach, official, facility personnel, or other individual of having sustained a possible head injury or concussion during practice or competition, the suspicion shall immediately be brought to the attention of the athlete's coach, facility personnel, the meet referee (if during competition), and the athlete's parents or guardians (if present). The athlete shall immediately be evaluated for a possible concussion. If upon evaluation, any party observing the evaluation believes the athlete exhibits one or more signs of a concussion, the athlete shall not return to practice or competition that day. Additionally, the athlete shall not return to practice or competition until the athlete has been evaluated by a licensed healthcare provider and has received a signed release authorization from a licensed healthcare provider.
- B. If an athlete has been diagnosed with a concussion that was sustained outside of practice or competition, it shall be the responsibility of the athlete (if 18 years of age or older) or the athlete's parents or guardians to inform the athlete's coach. The athlete shall not return to competition or practice that day nor until the athlete has been evaluated by a licensed healthcare provider and has received a signed release authorization from a licensed health care provider.
- C. If an athlete acts in such a way that the athlete's coach suspects that the athlete may have sustained a concussion outside of practice or competition, the suspicion shall be handled as described in 2.5A above.
- D. Any incident occurring at practice or competition that results in a head injury or suspected concussion shall be reported using the online USA Swimming Report of Occurrence form.

2.6 Return-to-play protocol

- A. No athlete shall participate in practice or competition the same day that the athlete:
  - (1) exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors that are suggestive of a concussion, or
  - (2) has been diagnosed with a concussion

- B. No athlete shall return to practice or competition on the days after the athlete exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors that are suggestive of a concussion until a signed release authorization has been received from a licensed healthcare provider attesting that the athlete was not diagnosed as having a concussion.
- C. No athlete diagnosed with a concussion shall return to practice or competition until the athlete receives a written signed release authorization from an appropriate licensed healthcare provider.

2.7 Meet announcement language

- A. The following statement shall be included in the Rules section of all meet announcement for all VSI sanctioned or approved competitions:

*Any situation that could potentially result in an athlete sustaining a concussion (eg, collision with the wall or another swimmer, kicked in the head by another swimmer, a fall that results in the athlete's head impacting the deck/floor/ground) shall immediately be reported to the meet referee. If the athlete is exhibiting signs of a concussion, the athlete will immediately be removed from competition and shall not return to competition that day. The athlete may return to competition on a subsequent day, but only with a release authorization signed by a licensed healthcare provider.*

2.8 Meet referee

- A. The designated meet referee for a VSI-sanctioned or a VSI-approved meet when the meet sanction or approval is held by VSI or a VSI-member club shall have completed either the CDC or NFHS concussion management training course.

*[2.8 shall automatically sunset on January 1, 2020, when the USA-S concussion training requirements go into effect.]*