



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS ATHLETIC TRAINING

Abbreviated Concussion Policy

If a concussion is suspected, the athlete will be pulled from play and evaluated by the Athletic Trainer (AT). No athlete will be allowed to return to play with a concussion. Any athlete who sustains a concussion has to follow the laws and protocols set by the State of New Hampshire, the NHIAA, and St. Thomas Aquinas High School. An abbreviated version of these protocols is listed below in an easy step-wise process.

***Medications with concussions: Preferably, no OTC medications should be administered. However, if it is absolutely necessary for headache pain, please only use ACETAMINOPHEN/Tylenol. ***

1. **Diagnosis** – The Athletic Trainer will evaluate the student-athlete and determine if a concussion is present. If diagnosed, the athlete must rest both physically AND mentally as much as possible through the recovery period. **No athlete will be allowed to participate in any physical activity until cleared by the Athletic Trainer and parent permission is given.**
2. **Academic Plan** – the student athlete and parents must contact their designated guidance counselor as soon as possible to set up the academic plan. Guidance is experienced and has a process in place to help the concussed student athlete to heal as well as complete the necessary school work.
3. **Concussion Specialist appointment** - the student athlete must be seen by a doctor. Seeing one of the sports concussion specialists in the area is highly recommended. The STA AT has contact with them and can help facilitate being seen in a timely manner (approximately 24-72 hours after). The concussion specialist and AT will work together to ensure a fast and safe return to play.
4. **Recovery** – The student-athlete is expected to see the Athletic Trainer daily for a reevaluation daily. If he/she is unable to see the AT in person, they must check in via Remind. He/she will be set up with a google class where they can access the daily symptom sheet and other concussion tools. The symptom sheet (google form) must be completed daily to evaluate and monitor progress. The doctor and AT may decide that it is necessary in the first few days, to not attend school, or partially attend. Accommodations will be given as needed. Once symptoms have decreased and are stable, and the student athlete is able to complete normal school work, the AT will facilitate monitored physical activity and begin progressing through the return to play protocol. Absolutely NO physical activity should occur outside of the guidance from the AT and maximum mental rest must occur. They must also check in with guidance every 3 days to evaluate the academic plan.
5. **Asymptomatic** – once the student athlete has become symptom free without medication and is able to complete all school work, including testing, they will be tested (IMPACT) to ensure they are ready to return to contact play (listed below).

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6. **Clearance** - once the athlete has passed all return to play steps (including contact practice and game), they will be given clearance from the AT. A form will need to be signed by the parents, giving permission for their son/daughter to return.

Return to Play Protocol (RTP) – each step must be separated with 24 hours, if at any time symptoms occur the athlete will rest and repeat the last asymptomatic stage. All stages will occur under the observation of the Athletic Trainer.

Light aerobic activity

Increased aerobic activity and sport specific drills

Non-contact skills & coordination

Full practice (first day with team) - *must pass IMPACT first.*

Game ready, given parent sign off.

With new information coming out daily about the health risks of concussions, it is a necessity that the concussed student-athlete be evaluated by a Sports Concussion Specialist (listed below). **These physicians are the most knowledgeable in the diagnosis and treatment of concussions and work very closely with me to make sure the student-athlete gets back as soon as possible without complications.** Please let me know who you will be seeing of the following. If you would like to see Dr. McMahon, I will contact him directly and his office will then contact you to set up an appointment.

Dr. McMahon – Team Physician

Atlantic Orthopedics

Portsmouth, NH/York, ME

603-431-1121 - **I can contact directly to get seen faster**



Glen D. Crawford, MD
Robert E. Eberhart, MD
Mayo A. Noerdlinger, MD
Akhilesh Sastry, MD
William S. Sutherland, MD
Tyler P. Welch, MD
J. Andrew McMahon, DO
Cameron L. Elits, DPM
Brian D. Barry, PA-C
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What is a concussion?

The term concussion conjures up the image of someone getting knocked unconscious while playing sports. But concussions can happen with any head injury and often without any loss of consciousness or spectacular collision. The injury can also be the result of a blow to the body that causes the brain to accelerate and decelerate inside the skull.

Concussions are an injury of function, not structure. If we scan the head with CT scanners or MRIs, we don't see anything broken, bleeding, or bruised. When a concussion happens, the brain's homeostasis (or balance) is disrupted and it fights to restore balance so that it can resume all of its regular tasks, like memory, concentration, and mood. This fight to get better consumes a lot of resources, leaving very little energy for normal brain function. In a sense, the brain is in an "energy crisis" and all of its normal activities are affected.

What are the symptoms of Concussion?

This energy crisis can (and does) affect all types of brain functions. Some of these symptoms may be immediate while others may develop over hours.

- *Headache
- *Nausea, dizziness
- *Sensitivity to light and sound
- *Poor concentration, memory
- *Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- *Fatigue
- *Irritability, sadness, anxiety, anger
- *Confusion, feel "foggy"
- *Don't "feel right", feel "off"
- *Vision problems

What are the symptoms of concussion that should prompt a trip to the Emergency Room?

- *A change in the level of alertness (really confused or goofy)
- *Extreme sleepiness (CAN'T stay awake)
- *An extremely bad headache that is getting worse
- *Repeated vomiting
- *Seizure
- *Weakness, numbness in other parts of the body

Now what?

Take your son/daughter directly home and have them rest. You should not wake them up to check on them, but do have them sleep in a safe location near a responsible adult who can monitor them throughout the first night. Do not leave them home alone the first night and do not leave them with an older sibling. Rest and sleep as much as possible through the weekend and avoid phones, computers, TVs, and all physical and mental stressors. You may treat headaches with Tylenol. Monday morning, keep your child home from school and call their primary care providers office or the Atlantic Sports Medicine Concussion Center at 603-431-1121 for further evaluation, education, and a return to school plan.