

Concussion Guide for Parents



THE HUMAN MOTION INSTITUTE AT RANDOLPH HOSPITAL
www.randolphhumanmotioninstitute.org

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Concussion Guide for Parents

GFELLER-WALLER CONCUSSION AWARENESS ACT

The Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act was created to help educate, and prepare for concussions in high school and middle school athletics. The law is named for two North Carolina football players who died as a result of concussion related injury and whose deaths could have been prevented with proper preparation.

Matthew Gfeller suffered a severe helmet to helmet collision during his first varsity football game at RJ Reynolds high school. Matthew never regained consciousness and died two days later. The accident caused a fatal traumatic brain injury.

Jaquan Waller suffered a concussion at a practice at JH Rose High School. He played in a game two days later, without being medically cleared, and collapsed on the sideline. He died the following day as a result of Second Impact Syndrome.

The Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act has three main sections:

- 1. Education:** Each school shall develop a concussion safety training program. In order to be in compliance with the portion of the law, Concussion Information for Coaches/School Nurses/School volunteers and Concussion Information for Student Athlete/Parent forms are given as education materials. Each person who receives those materials is required to complete and sign the Concussion Statement form.
- 2. Emergency Action Plan and Post-concussion Protocol:** Each school is required to have an Emergency Action Plan in case of any serious athletic injury or illness. Included in the Emergency Action Plan is a post-concussion protocol which states the actions that will be taken in the case of suspected concussion. By law, an athlete who has a suspected concussion shall be removed from the activity and WILL NOT be allowed to play or practice on the same day.
- 3. Clearance/Return to Play following a Concussion:** An athlete with a suspected concussion must be evaluated and receive written clearance by a medical professional trained in concussion management before he or she returns to practice or play. The Gfeller-Waller Clearance/NCHSAA Return to Play Form must be completed by a physician and returned to the Athletic Trainer, First Responder, or Coach. In order to be in compliance with the law, these forms must be kept on file.



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The majority of Randolph County and Asheboro City School athletes are under the age of 18. It is important to properly notify and educate the parents of these athletes when there is a suspected concussion. The following will aid in educating you, as a parent, on the proper steps in providing care if your student athlete has a suspected concussion.

CONCUSSION BASICS: SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

During the upcoming athletic season, your student athlete may be assessed for a suspected concussion. A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury and should be taken seriously. Such a brain injury may present with several different signs and symptoms. These signs and symptoms may change and progress over several days and may present as follows:

| | | | |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Headache | Pressure in head | Neck Pain | Nausea/Vomiting |
| Dizziness | Blurred Vision | Balance Problems | Sensitivity to Light |
| Confusion | Memory loss | Difficulty Concentrating | Sensitivity to Noise |
| Drowsiness | Irritability | Nervous/Anxious | More Emotional |
| Seeing Stars | Sluggishness | | |

WHEN TO SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION

Please seek further medical care if your student athlete has an increase in these symptoms:

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| seizures | neck pain | repeated vomiting |
| slurred speech | weakness in arms or legs | numbness in arms or legs |
| unusual behavior changes | unequal pupil size | fluid from the ears or nose |
| loss of consciousness | | |

These symptoms may indicate critical injury and deteriorating neurological function.



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HOME INSTRUCTIONS

After sustaining a concussion, the best rehabilitation is physical and cognitive (mental) rest. This means moving and thinking as little as possible. The following are recommendations for your student athlete:

- Get plenty of rest/sleep. There is no need to wake up frequently unless the student athlete experienced loss of consciousness.
- Use an ice pack on the head or neck for comfort.
- If symptoms include nausea/vomiting, eat a light diet. Avoid spicy foods.
- Drink plenty of fluids. **NO** alcohol.
- The student athlete can take acetaminophen (Tylenol). **DO NOT** use anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen/Advil, aspirin, naproxen/Aleve, as they may mask symptoms or make them worse. It is recommend that **NO** medications are taken for the first 10 days after injury. Consult your physician regarding any medication questions or concerns.
- The student athlete **SHOULD NOT** drive while symptomatic.
- The student athlete **SHOULD NOT** exercise or lift weights while symptomatic. This includes PE class, weight lifting, dance or other classes involving physical activity.
- Limit use of electronics while symptomatic.
- Inform teachers that the student athlete has had a concussion. The student athlete may have increased problems paying attention or concentrating and they may need longer to complete a task.

If the student athlete is experiencing any symptoms as a result of a concussion, he or she is considered to be at **Stage 0**.



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WHAT IS STAGE 0?

In order to return to full competition (Stage 6), the student athlete must progress through Stages 0 to 5. **Stage 0** means that the student athlete is suspected to have a concussion and that he or she is displaying one or more of the signs or symptoms of a concussion. The student athlete should remain on **Stage 0** until he or she is evaluated by a physician and that physician permits progression to Stage 1.

Stage 0 may also be called a period of rest. A concussion, like any other injury needs time to heal. Because a concussion is an injury to the brain, the healing process includes both physical AND mental rest. Lack of rest will cause a longer period of healing time and may cause a longer time until full recovery.

The student athlete at **Stage 0** should practice the following recommendations:

Physical Rest

It is important to limit any activity that may increase blood flow or heart rate. Most of the following activities increase the heart rate, which increases blood flow to the brain and may cause symptoms to increase.

- Avoid positions that put the head lower than the rest of the body. This increases blood flow to the brain.
- Limit excessive motion. If he/she has to move, move in slow controlled motions as to not increase heart rate.
- Avoid lifting or moving heavy objects.

Mental Rest

The only time a person can achieve complete mental rest is during sleep. Each person has a different mental tolerance. If a mental activity increases symptoms, those are the activities the student athlete should limit. Limit the following mentally stimulating activities:

- Using a computer
- Watching TV
- Using a cell phone or texting
- Reading
- Playing Video Games
- Listening to loud music



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CONCUSSION RETURN TO PLAY GUIDE

The following information may help answer some of your questions and provide directions for follow-up care.

ImPACT Testing

Be advised that your school may participate in the ImPACT Concussion Management system. ImPACT is a computer based testing program that takes about 30 - 45 minutes and measures attention, verbal and visual memory, processing speed and reaction time. The student athlete may have a baseline score of these measures on record. In the event of a concussion, a follow-up test is performed to compare baseline results to the student athlete's current state. Please know that the ImPACT system does **NOT** diagnose concussions. The student athlete's results will be sent to his/her designated physician and will aid in the return to play decision.

Physician Clearance

The Gfeller-Waller Law requires that the student athlete be cleared by a physician (MD or DO) before returning to play. The student athlete should see a physician after completing the ImPACT test unless instructed otherwise, and a signed Gfeller-Waller form must be returned to the Athletic Trainer, First Responder, or Coach. The Gfeller-Waller Clearance form contains physician's recommendations for sports, physical education and academics.

Return to Play

Please be aware that the student athlete will be progressed appropriately into participation. **For their safety, they will be physically exerted over AT LEAST a six day period.** Progression into participation will only occur when your child no longer has **ANY** concussion symptoms. A detailed, sport specific Return to Play progression may be provided upon request.

Return to Learn

Please be aware that the student athlete may not perform at his or her typical level while recovering from a concussion. For most students, only temporary academic adjustments are needed during recovery. Check your school's policy for concussion management. The student athlete may be eligible for a 504 plan, IEP or Transitory Impairment Plan. The type of support will differ depending on the specific needs of each student athlete. A detailed Return to Learn progression may be provided upon request.

Second Impact Syndrome

Second Impact Syndrome is a dangerous condition which can occur if a student athlete returns to sports before full recovery. If a student athlete sustains a second concussive injury, even a relatively minor one, before the symptoms of the initial concussion have cleared, the consequences can be deadly.



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“MY CHILD MAY HAVE A CONCUSSION. NOW WHAT?”

Post Concussion Check List

- [] **A concussion is suspected.** Remove your student athlete from participation for the remainder of the day. At this time your student athlete is at Stage 0, which means complete rest. Avoid physical activity and limit mental activity. They should be assessed for a concussion by a medical provider trained in concussion management (This may include your school’s Certified Athletic Trainer).
- [] **Review Concussion Guide for Parents.** This packet includes important information regarding NC State Law, Signs and Symptoms, At Home Care, and Return to Play Guide.
- [] **Monitor and note changes in your student athlete’s symptoms.** Over the next few days symptoms may come, go, and change. If there is a sudden increase in the severity of symptoms, seek immediate medical attention.
- [] **Complete ImPACT Concussion Testing.** All contact sports in Randolph County/Asheboro City High Schools and middle school football participate in testing. Testing should be performed within 72 hours of initial injury to obtain adequate results to measure severity of the injury.
- [] **After receiving official ImPACT results, make an appointment with a physician.** Once your student athlete has completed the ImPACT test, someone from their school will notify the Concussion Hotline that they have been tested. Official ImPACT test results will be sent to the school within 24 hours of notification. If a physician’s name is provided, the results will also be faxed to the physician’s office. Please be aware that your student athlete’s physician may request multiple re-tests before obtaining clearance.
- [] **Gfeller-Waller Clearance Form Signed.** An athlete **SHOULD NOT** begin a return to play progression until authorized in writing by a physician (MD or DO). Please note that Nurse Practitioners and/or Physician’s Assistants cannot sign this form without a collaborating physician’s signature. The Gfeller-Waller Clearance form provides adequate documentation and complies with state law. The form can be found at <http://gfellerwallerlaw.unc.ued/GfellerWallerLaw/gwlaw.html>
- [] **Clearance form returned to Athletic Trainer, School Nurse, Athletic Director or Coach.** By law, this form must be kept on file at the school. Contact one of these individuals on days your student athlete is not at school.
- [] **Begin Return to Play Progression.** Per state law, once the student athlete has been cleared by a physician, they must complete a 6 stage return to play progression (a minimum of 6 days). The student athlete may only begin a return to play progression once **ALL** concussion symptoms have resolved.
- [] **Call with any questions or concerns.** Please contact your physician, Certified Athletic Trainer, or the Concussion Hotline. The Concussion Hotline, (336) 953-4173, is provided by the Human Motion Institute at Randolph Hospital as a way to help ensure that all Randolph County athletes have immediate access to proper concussion education and care.



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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act

- <http://gfellerwallerlaw.unc.edu>
- <http://tbicenter.unc.edu>

NCHSAA Concussion Management

- <http://www.nchsaa.org/pages/464/health-safety-sports-medicine/>

NATA Position Statement: Management of Sport-Related Concussion

- http://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/Concussion_Management_Postion_Statement.pdf

SCAT3

- <http://www.physicians.catonline.com/scat>
- <http://irbplayerwelfare.com/?documentid=127>

ImPACT

- <http://impacttest.com>

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

- <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/schools.html>



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(336) 953-4173

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immediate access to proper
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