

# Officiating: Your Role in Recognizing Possible Concussion

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## New NFHS Rule

- \* 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 until cleared by an appropriate health care professional. (Please see NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in the Appendix in the back of each NFHS Rule Book).

## What is a Concussion?

- \* A concussion is a traumatic brain injury which interferes with normal brain function. An athlete does not have to lose consciousness (be “knocked-out) to have suffered a concussion.
- \* A concussion occurs when the brain bounces around and strikes the inside of the skull.

## What is a Concussion?

- \* Concussion animation



## What is a Concussion?

### \* Tim Tebow's Concussion



## Who should recognize a possible concussion?

- \* **A team approach. Recognizing possible concussion requires everyone to observe for signs and behaviors consistent with a concussion. We want all of the following to observe for possible concussion:**
  - \* Officials
  - \* Coaches
  - \* Parents
  - \* Teammates
  - \* Appropriate Health Care Professionals

## What is the Official's Role?

- \* **Observe for signs and behaviors consistent with a concussion.**
- \* **Officials are not expected to “diagnose” a concussion; that is the responsibility of an appropriate health care professional. (In NM an MD, DO, PA, CNP, clinical psychologist, or athletic trainer)**

## What is the Official's Role?

- \* **If you observe signs or behaviors consistent with a concussion remove the athlete from participation.**
- \* **Sideline evaluation is the responsibility of the head coach, appropriate health care providers, or school administrators.**

## What is the Official's Role?

- \* If an appropriate health care professional determines that the athlete **HAS NOT** suffered a concussion, the athlete may return to play.
- \* If no appropriate health care professional is present to evaluate the athlete, the athlete **SHOULD NOT** be allowed by the coach to return to play that day.

## What is the Official's Role?

- \* The official does not need written permission for an athlete to return to play.
- \* The official does not need to verify the credentials of the appropriate health care professional.
- \* Ensuring compliance with the Suggested Management Guidelines is a health and safety issue and should be the responsibility of the head coach and school administration, **NOT** the game official.

## What is the Official's Role?

- \* **The NM legislature has passed a law about Brain Injury and Sport Participation (SB1)**
- \* **Legal duties in the bill are assigned to coaches, school districts and the NMAA NOT TO game officials.**

## What signs and behaviors should you observe for?

- \* **Signs**
  - \* **Loss of consciousness**
  - \* **Dizziness**
  - \* **Disorientation/Confusion**
  - \* **Balance Problems**

## What signs and behaviors should you observe for?

- \* **Behaviors**
  - \* **Athlete is more emotional**
  - \* **Athlete becomes belligerent**
  - \* **Confusion**
  - \* **Disorientation**

## Want more information?

- \* **A free online course entitled “Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know” is available from NFHS at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)**