



# CONCUSSION SAFETY POLICY & RETURN-TO-PLAY PROTOCOL

## 1. Purpose

UFootballSC is committed to protecting the health and safety of all participants. This policy establishes procedures for recognizing, managing, and responding to suspected concussions and outlines the requirements for a safe return to physical activity following a concussion.

The academy recognizes that concussions are serious injuries that require immediate attention and appropriate medical management.

## 2. Definition of a Concussion

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a direct or indirect impact to the head, face, neck, or body that results in forces being transmitted to the brain.

A concussion may occur with or without a loss of consciousness.

## 3. Common Signs and Symptoms

A participant may have suffered a concussion if they display one or more of the following signs or symptoms:

### Physical Symptoms

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Balance problems
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Blurred vision

### Cognitive Symptoms

- Confusion
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory problems

- Slow response to questions

### **Emotional Symptoms**

- Irritability
- Mood changes
- Anxiety
- Unusual emotional responses

### **Sleep-Related Symptoms**

- Excessive fatigue
- Drowsiness
- Difficulty sleeping

## **4. Immediate Removal from Activity**

Any participant suspected of having sustained a concussion must be removed from training, competition, or academy activities immediately.

When in doubt, the participant should not continue participation on the same day.

A player removed due to a suspected concussion must not return to activity until appropriate medical clearance requirements have been satisfied.

## **5. Emergency Response**

Emergency medical assistance should be sought immediately if a participant experiences:

- Loss of consciousness
- Repeated vomiting
- Worsening headache
- Seizures
- Significant confusion
- Difficulty speaking
- Weakness or numbness
- Neck pain following injury
- Any rapidly worsening symptoms

Parents or guardians must be notified as soon as possible.

## **6. Medical Assessment**

Any participant suspected of having sustained a concussion should be assessed by an appropriately qualified healthcare professional.

Medical evaluation helps determine whether a concussion has occurred and what level of recovery management is required.

## **7. Recovery Management**

Following a concussion diagnosis, participants should follow medical recommendations regarding rest, school activities, physical activity, and recovery progression.

Recovery timelines vary from person to person and should never be rushed.

UFootballSC supports an athlete-centered recovery process focused on long-term health.

## **8. Return-to-Learn**

Participants should successfully return to normal academic activities before progressing to full soccer participation.

School accommodations may be required during recovery.

Parents are encouraged to work closely with healthcare professionals and educational institutions throughout the recovery process.

## **9. Return-to-Play Protocol**

A participant diagnosed with a concussion must successfully complete each stage before progressing to the next.

### **Stage 1 – Recovery and Rest**

Complete physical and cognitive rest as recommended by a healthcare professional.

### **Stage 2 – Light Physical Activity**

Walking, light cycling, or other low-intensity activity that does not worsen symptoms.

### **Stage 3 – Individual Soccer Activities**

Light soccer-specific movement without physical contact.

### **Stage 4 – Non-Contact Training**

Controlled training activities without contact or competition.

### **Stage 5 – Full Training Participation**

Participation in normal training sessions following medical approval.

### **Stage 6 – Return to Competition**

Full return to games and competition following successful completion of all previous stages.

If symptoms return at any stage, activity should stop immediately and medical advice should be sought before continuing progression.

## **10. Parent Responsibilities**

Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- Reporting suspected concussions.
- Providing relevant medical information.
- Following healthcare recommendations.
- Supporting recovery requirements.
- Providing medical clearance documentation when required.

## **11. Coach Responsibilities**

Coaches and academy staff are responsible for:

- Recognizing potential concussion symptoms.
- Removing participants from activity immediately when concerns arise.
- Communicating with parents or guardians.
- Following academy concussion procedures.
- Prioritizing participant safety over competition.

## **12. Medical Clearance**

UFootballSC reserves the right to request written medical clearance before allowing a participant to return to training, competition, or academy activities following a concussion.

## **13. Commitment to Athlete Safety**

UFootballSC prioritizes the long-term health and well-being of every participant.

No player will be encouraged or permitted to return to participation before it is safe to do so.

Player safety will always take precedence over competition, performance, or team objectives.