

## UKU Concussion Information

This information is designed to educate UKU members regarding concussion. There are links relating to assessment and management. Please review these for more information.

### What is concussion?

A concussion is a milder form of traumatic brain injury resulting in a temporarily disturbed or altered brain function<sup>1</sup>.

### Why does concussion happen?

It occurs by a direct or indirect blow to the head. It can also be from a rapid movement of the head<sup>1</sup>.

### How often does it occur in Ultimate?

There are estimated 3.8 million concussions in the USA per year in competitive and recreational sports<sup>2</sup>. Recent research identified that of over 750 ultimate players, around 25% had experienced at least one concussion while playing<sup>3</sup>.

### How to assess for concussion?

Concussion is initially assessed using a short assessment. This includes signs (what the player is doing) and symptoms (what the player is reporting) and some questions.

Signs to recognise	Symptoms they report	<b>IF ANY OF THESE SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS ARE SUSPECTED REMOVE THE PLAYER FROM PLAY IMMEDIATELY</b>
Dazed look	Headache	
Unsteady	Confusion	
Confused	Dizziness	
Clutching Head	Visual Problems	
Motionless	Nausea or Vomiting	
Unresponsive	Fatigue	
Seizure	Drowsiness	
Heightened irritability or emotion	Pressure in Head	
	Sensitivity to light or noise	

Questions to ask the player with suspected concussion:

1. Where are we now?
2. What time of day is it?
3. How did we get here today?
4. Where were you on this day last week?
5. Who scored last? Or What team are you playing against?

**IF IN DOUBT SIT THEM OUT**

This is the most important aspect of any suspected concussion assessment

This information has been taken from the Scottish Sport Concussion Guidance Card which can be printed off as a pocket guide:

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/media-imported/1540383/concussioncardfp.pdf>

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/media-imported/1534418/scottish-sports-concussion-guidance-card.pdf>

If the concussion is suspected the player should be reviewed in hospital – Emergency Department. Ideally this should be done the same day as the injury. A more formal assessment of the concussion should be made by a doctor or allied health professional (physiotherapist/sports therapist) who is confident to complete the assessment. The more formal assessment is the SCAT assessment available here:

[Sport concussion assessment tool - 5th edition](#)

This gives a baseline score of symptoms and signs relating to concussion. A normal score can be achieved, however a concussion can still be suspected by considering how the player is behaving and the mechanism of injury.

#### How to return to playing Ultimate after a concussion injury?

Return to play guidance is available in the Scottish Sport Concussion Guidelines. The return to play guidance is age dependent (19 and under/over 19). They follow the same steps but with a slower time for 19 and under as they have a developing brain which is more susceptible to concussion injuries.

**Phase 1** – minimum rest period (complete body and brain rest)

**Phase 2** – light exercise (walk/light jog/static cycle, no resistance training or hard running)

**Phase 3** – sport specific drills (running drills with limited head/body movement)

**Phase 4** – non-contact training (complex training with increased intensity/coordination – passing the disc and involving it in simple drills)

**Phase 5** – normal training activities

**Phase 6** – normal matchplay

#### **IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THE FOLLOWING**

- Phase 1 for adults is a minimum of 7 days, for 19-and-under it is 14 days minimum.
- Phase 2-5 are progressed every 24-48 hours for adults and 48-72 hours for under 19
- An adult will be at phase 6 at least 12 days post injury, for under 19 this will be 23 days

For full guidance on return to play review the information linked with the Scottish Sport Concussion Guidelines

#### Post-concussion syndrome

This is a really useful website about post-concussion syndrome led by a neurologist based in Edinburgh.

[Post-Concussion Syndrome](#)

## References

(1) Scottish Concussion Guidelines [IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT.](#)

(2) Concussion in sport

[American Medical Society for Sports Medicine position statement: concussion in sport](#)

(3) Reported concussion in ultimate frisbee

[Concussion Prevalence in Competitive Ultimate Frisbee Players](#)

*Thanks to Dr K Duffy (MBCHB BSc Hons MCSP MRCGP) for preparing this guidance, Feb 2020.*