

YSE 2024 Concussion & Return to Play Protocols

1. Players after a concussion or suspected concussion should introduce light exercise after 24-48 hours of relative rest.
 - a. Relative rest includes not working and minimizing as much screen time as possible.
2. There should be a gradual re-introduction to learning or work activities. Physical activity, as well as cognitive stimulation such as using screens, reading, undertaking learning activities, should be gradually introduced after 48 hours.
3. **Players need to be 14 days symptom free before returning to contact/collision training.** If they experience **mild** worsening of symptoms with light exercise in the 14 days, then this is acceptable, so long as the symptoms quickly resolve at the completion of exercise (within 1hr). If symptoms linger, a player is not to return to contact or collision training.
4. **There is a minimum period of 21 days until the resumption of competitive contact or collision sport.**
5. Optimal return to work or return to school is of a higher priority than return to sport. The athlete should not return to full contact sport activities until they have successfully completed a full return to school/work, and all symptoms have resolved.

How to recognise concussion:

- https://sma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/37382_Concussion-Guidelines-for-community-and-youth-FA-acc-v2.pdf

Stages of Graded Return to Play:

- <https://play.afl/sites/default/files/2024-03/Four-Stages-of-Graded-Return-To-Play.pdf>

Medical Clearance Form:

- https://play.afl/sites/default/files/2024-03/Medical-Clearance-Form_0.pdf

SCOAT6: Sport Concussion Office Assessment Tool (for Medical Practitioners to use)

- <https://play.afl/sites/default/files/2024-03/SCOAT6-v8.pdf>

What is our return to footy protocol? Long answer:

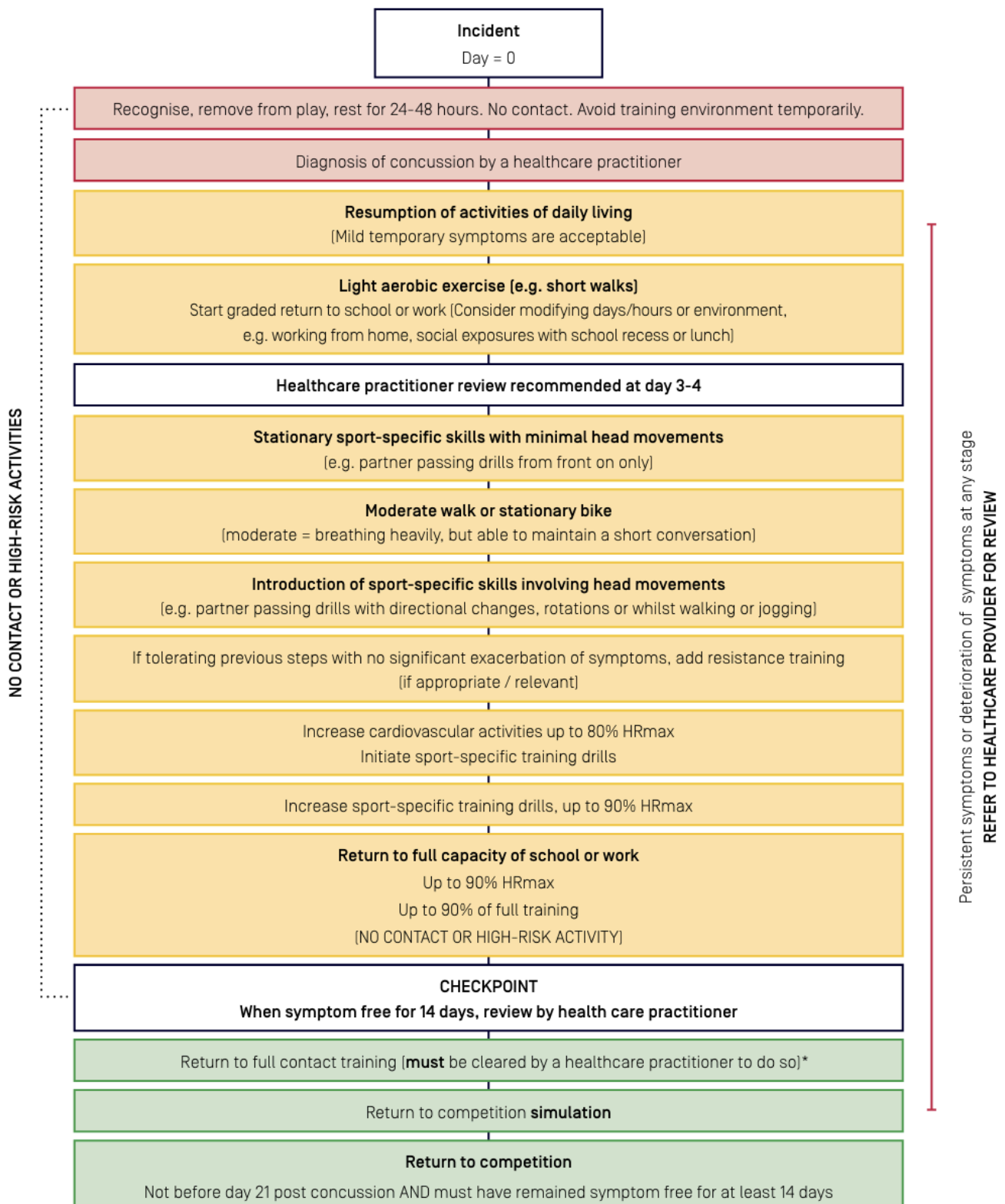
1. A player must be seen by a Health Care Practitioner at the earliest opportunity, and should commence a graded return to sport and learning activities. **A player must be seen within 72 hours from the suspected concussion.**
 - a. **Please remember that concussion evolves; signs and symptoms can change, or be delayed. Concussions symptoms will not always be easy to spot and may be difficult to detect. It may take up to 48-72 hours following a head contact to exclude a diagnosis of concussion. It is up to senior players to be honest about if they have experienced symptoms, and up to parents and teachers to monitor junior players' behaviors and note any abnormalities over this immediate period.**
2. Any player that is suspected of a concussion is removed from high-contact or high-intensity efforts at training the week following the suspected concussion; this is non-negotiable. A player cannot return to contact or collision training until they are symptom free for 14 days.
 - a. **Say for example I get a concussion on a Saturday (day 0). I have a headache until Thursday, when all symptoms clear (day 5). I now need to wait 14 days until I can re-commence contact and high intensity training.**
3. Senior players suspected of a concussion:
 - a. Should not be left alone, for at least 3 hours, in case symptoms worsen.
 - b. Should not be allowed to consume alcohol in the next 3 days
 - c. Should not drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a medical professional, so encourage them to get a peer to drive their car home or get a partner to help.
 - d. Should not leave the ground alone or be sent home alone
 - e. Should not go to work in the coming 48-72 hours if they are going to exacerbate any symptoms (for example jobs with loud noises, constant screen time, high cognitive demands, or labor work).
4. Junior players:
 - a. Should not be left alone for 3 hours after a suspected concussion
 - b. Should not be sent home with another parent or a friend; their parent(s) need to be contacted if not present to collect their child and take them home.
 - c. **Children and adolescents take longer to recover from concussion than adults. A more conservative approach should be taken for those aged under 19.**

Yarraville-Seddon Eagles Return to Play Process:

1. This is for the most part managed by the Coaches, Team Managers and Trainers per team. ALL documentation can be shared amongst coaches with trainers@yseagles.com.au cc'd into all correspondence.
2. **A trainer or coach will report a suspected concussion. The trainer needs to ensure that the coach is aware of who has been hurt and that we need to monitor them over the coming 3 weeks. All players will liaise with Coaches, with the support of their trainers as requested.**
3. Within the next 24-72 hours, players are **required** to have been seen by a medical professional for an initial assessment and/or diagnosis of a concussion. This is a double edged sword; if a player is seen rapidly and cleared, they may develop symptoms over the coming days and not report them in. If a player waits, they can potentially worsen their symptoms. Each concussion is a case-by-case basis; do what seems best for the symptoms and behaviors you witness.
4. Players cannot participate in any contact or collision training, nor any high intensity training, for the following **week** post suspected concussion. Non-negotiable. Gradual activity increase may occur if no symptoms arise.
5. After 7 days, and all concussion symptoms have resolved, players can progress to **limited** contact training in week 2 post-concussion. If symptoms re-arise, they reduce their training load and the 14-day symptom window resets.
6. **Players cannot progress to full intensity contact training until they have received medical clearance on or after the day 14 mark, and have no symptoms. If players symptoms re-arise, they are to reduce their training load again until symptoms resolve, and seek medical care and assessment ASAP.**
 - a. **Players will not be able to progress to full contact training, nor will they be granted the opportunity to play on day 21, even if symptoms have resolved or even after the 14 day mark, if the Club / Coach has not received a Medical Clearance form. You are medically liable for their care if they do not provide the appropriate clearances to you.**

The process:

Figure 3: Graded return to sport framework for community and youth sport



(I personally found the above form not specific enough, so have made a YSE one).

Timeline:	What they can do	What they can't do:
Day 0-3 post concussion or suspected concussion	Rest and see a Medical Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the same intensity as normal, return to work or school in their regular manner (reduce initial work/study loads and monitor behaviours/responses) - Spend hours on screens - Participate in High Intensity Activity
<p>Players would need to see a Medical Practitioner in the first 24-72 hours post-concussion. Please have the medical practitioner complete the SCOAT6 (2024) specifically. Please receive a report from the player/parent in this time frame, and send a copy through to trainers@yseagles.com.au</p>		
Days 3-7 post concussion or suspected concussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start introducing light intensity activity/sport. This can progress to moderate intensity efforts throughout the week should symptoms not arise - Return to school/work if symptoms are low or resolved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do any high intensity training - Do any Change of Direction Work or any activity that requires rapid movement from the head/neck - Do any contact or collision training or sports
Days 8-14 post concussion or suspected concussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They may return to moderate intensity activity/sport should all symptoms have resolved, but no contacting. No maximal or near-maximal efforts what so ever - Start re-introducing change of direction work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do any high intensity contact or collision training or sports; light and controlled contact or collision training is acceptable should it not exacerbate or recreate symptoms
<p>Players require medical clearance before returning to full contact activity. A Medical Practitioner is to complete the AFL Medical Clearance Form, specifically. Please have players/parents supply the clearance to the appropriate parties, and issue a copy to trainers@yseagles.com.au</p>		
Days 15-21 post concussion or suspected concussion	Go to a DR for re-assessment to provide medical clearance to the club. Players cannot return to full intensity training until medical clearance is provided	Return to high contact/collision training if symptoms are persisting or re-arising, or if medical clearance has not been provided
<p>This is a rough guide. These loose recommendations cannot be applied in players whose symptoms persist.</p>		
<p>Players cannot return to competition until at least day 21, AND must have in that 21 day period remained symptom free for 14 days prior to the 21st day.</p>		

Resources / references:

- <https://www.afl.com.au/news/1082723/community-football-to-adopt-minimum-21-day-return-to-play-protocols#:~:text=My%20Telstra-,2024%20AFL%20Concussion%20Protocols%3A%20Community%20football%20to%20adopt%20minimum,day%20return%20to%20play%20protocols&text=2024%2C%2010%3A30pm-,The%20AFL%20today%20announced%20important%20developments%20in%20relation%20to%20the,Australian%20Football%2C%20including%20community%20football.>
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