

# Removal-From-Sport and Return-To-Sport Protocols

## Purpose

Everyone involved in sports, including athletes, parents or guardians, coaches, team trainers, officials, teachers and licensed health-care professionals, can play a role in helping to prevent, identify and manage concussions. For more information on concussions and concussions in sport, please visit [www.Ontario.ca/concussions](http://www.Ontario.ca/concussions).

## Designated Persons

In accordance with the requirements set out in *Rowan's Law*, every sport organization is required to identify a designated person(s) as having specific responsibilities under the removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols. The responsibilities of the designated person(s) may be shared between one or more individuals.

The Gloucester Dragons have determined that each team shall have at least one designated person. This person can be the coach, the assistant coach, a team manager or a committed parent who attends all games and practices. We suggest that at least two people per team read and understand the removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols set out below.

### **Under the Gloucester Dragons' Removal-from-Sport protocol, the designated persons are responsible for ensuring that:**

- An athlete is immediately removed from further training, practice or competition if the athlete has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion, regardless of whether or not the concussion was sustained from a sport activity associated with the Dragons.
- If, in the opinion of the designated person, there is an emergency and/or any red flag signs and/or symptoms appear, including those resulting from a suspected concussion, call 911.
- Removal of the athlete from further training, practice or competition, and if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the parent or guardian is informed of the removal.
- The athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, is advised that the athlete is required to undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner before the athlete will be permitted to return to training, practice or competition according to the Gloucester Dragons' Return-to-Sport protocol.

- An athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian receives the Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport protocols for the Gloucester Dragons as soon as possible after the athlete's removal.
- Once removed, the athlete is not permitted to return to practice or games except in accordance with the Gloucester Dragons' Return-to-Sport protocol.

**Under the Gloucester Dragons' Return-to-Sport protocol, the designated persons are responsible for ensuring that:**

- An athlete who has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion does not return to training, practice or competition until permitted to do so in accordance with the Dragons' Return-to-Sport protocol.
- When an athlete has **not** been diagnosed with a concussion, the athlete is only permitted to return to training, practice or competition if the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian provides confirmation to the designated persons about the outcome of the athlete's medical assessment, specifically that the athlete:
  - has undergone a medical assessment by the physician or nurse practitioner and has **not** been diagnosed as having a concussion, and
  - has been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition by a physician or nurse practitioner.
- When an athlete **is** diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner as having a concussion, the athlete is not permitted to move on to unrestricted training, practice or competition unless the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian provides a confirmation of medical clearance by the physician or nurse practitioner to the designated person.
- An athlete is not permitted to return to training, practice or games through the Gloucester Dragons' graduated Return-to-Sport steps unless the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian has shared the medical advice or recommendations they received, if any, with the designated person.
- When an athlete is diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner as having a concussion, the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent/guardian has been informed of the importance of disclosing the diagnosis to any other sport organization with which the athlete is registered or school that the athlete attends.

A designated person may rely on the information received from an athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, from the athlete's parent or guardian in carrying out their responsibilities under the Dragons' Return-to-Sport protocol.

## Removal-from-Sport Protocol

**The following outlines a process for immediate removal of an athlete who is suspected of having sustained a concussion.**

### 1. Remove the Athlete

Designated person to immediately remove the athlete from further training, practice or competition if the athlete has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion regardless of whether the concussion or suspected concussion was sustained from an activity associated with the Gloucester Dragons.

### 2. Call 9-1-1 if Emergency

Designated person to call 9-1-1 if, in their opinion, doing so is necessary (e.g., if there is an emergency and any red flag signs and/or symptoms appear).

### 3. Inform

If the athlete is under 18 years of age, the designated person shall inform the athlete's parent or guardian about the removal from further training, practice or competition.

A medical assessment determines whether the athlete has a concussion. An athlete will not be permitted to return to training, practice or competition until they receive medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner to do so.
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The designated person shall advise the athlete, or the parent/guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, that the athlete must be assessed by a physician or nurse practitioner before the athlete will be permitted to return to training, practice or games.

### 4. Give Protocols

The designated person shall provide the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian with the Dragons' Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport protocols as soon as possible after the athlete has been removed from further training, practice or competition.

### 5. Record the Incident

Make and keep a record of incidences where an athlete is removed from further training, practice or competition because they are suspected of having sustained a concussion regardless of whether the athlete is later diagnosed with a concussion.

### 6. Returning to Training, Practice or Competition

Once removed, the athlete is not permitted to return to training, practice or games, except in accordance with the Dragons' Return-to-Sport protocol.

## Return-to-Sport Protocol

The following outlines a return-to-sport process for an athlete who has been removed from training, practice or competition due to a suspected or diagnosed concussion, regardless of whether or not the concussion was sustained or is suspected of having been sustained during a sport activity associated with the Gloucester Dragons.

### 1. Receive Confirmation

Ensure that an athlete who has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion does not return to training, practice or competition until the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian provides confirmation to the designated person that the athlete:

- a) Has undergone a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner and has not been diagnosed as having a concussion, and
- b) Has been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition by the physician or nurse practitioner.

### 2. If Diagnosed with Having a Concussion

If an athlete has been diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner as having a concussion, the athlete must proceed through the graduated return-to-sport steps.

#### The Return-to-School Plan (Learning and Physical Activity)

Students in elementary and secondary school with a diagnosed concussion must follow their school board's return-to-school plan, which supports a student's gradual return to learning and return to physical activity. Contact the school for more information.

### 3. Graduated Return-to-Sport Steps

It is important to note that typical recovery times vary from person to person and that some individuals may require more time to progress through the graduated return-to-sport steps.

The graduated return-to-sport steps may include the following activities. An athlete with a concussion must rest for 24 to 48 hours before beginning step 1.

	Activities	Goal of Step	Duration
<b>STEP 1:</b> Symptom-limiting activities	Daily activities that don't make symptoms worse, such as moving around the home and simple chores	Gradual reintroduction of daily school, and work activities	At least 24 hours
<b>STEP 2:</b> Light aerobic activity	Light activities such as walking or stationary bicycle at slow to medium pace for 10 to 15 minutes	Increase heart rate	At least 24 hours
<b>STEP 3:</b> Sport-specific exercise	Individual physical activity such as running or skating	Add movement	At least 24 hours

	No contact or head impact activities		
<b>STEP 4:</b> Non-contact training, practice drills	Harder training drills Add resistance training (if appropriate)	Exercise, coordination and increased thinking	At least 24 hours
<b>STEP 5:</b> Unrestricted Training and Practice	Unrestricted training and practice-with contact where applicable	Restore confidence and assess functional skills	At least 24 hours  Obtain clearance from physician or nurse practitioner before unrestricted training, practice or competition
<b>STEP 6:</b> Return-to-Sport	Unrestricted competition		

An athlete is typically ready to progress to the next step when they can do the activities at their current step without new or worsening symptoms. If at any step symptoms get worse, they should stop and return to the previous step before trying again. If symptoms do not improve or if the symptoms continue to worsen, the athlete should return to the physician or nurse practitioner.

#### **4. Share Medical Advice**

An athlete, or the athlete’s parent or guardian, must share the medical advice or recommendations they receive with the designated person(s) before being permitted to return to training, practice or competition through the graduated return-to-sport steps, if any.

#### **5. Disclosing Diagnosis**

The designated person must inform the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete’s parent or guardian of the importance of disclosing the diagnosis to any other sport organization with which the athlete is registered or school that the athlete attends.

#### **6. Medical Clearance**

The athlete, or the athlete’s parent or guardian, must provide the designated person with a confirmation of medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner before the athlete is permitted to move on to unrestricted training, practice or competition.

#### **7. Record Progression**

The sport organization must make and keep a record of the athlete’s progression through the graduated return-to-sport steps until the athlete, or the athlete’s parent or guardian, has provided a confirmation of medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner to the designated person(s).