



GREENSBOROUGH JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB

Concussion Policy

1. Purpose

The GJFC is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable playing experience and environment for players at all levels. The GJFC's highest priority is the health and wellbeing of our junior players. All players, families, volunteers, and officials have responsibilities to implement these policy requirements.

2. Scope

To actively support this commitment, the GJFC will adopt the NFL Concussion policy, and the AFL Community Concussion Guidelines as updated and published as to these guidelines will continue to evolve as new evidence is made available to ensure best practice, and that any concussion to our junior players is appropriately managed.

3. Policy

Accordingly, the GJFC will implement the following actions.

- promote concussion awareness and preventative training & playing techniques amongst our players, families, volunteers and officials
- provide concussion management training to our football team volunteers and officials, and ensure qualified trainers or first aiders are present at all scheduled matches
- equip our football team volunteers and officials with suitable tools and materials to adequately recognise and effectively assess players with suspected concussion
- empower our football team trainers and first aiders with the final authority to withdraw players from the field and the rest of the match. In any instance of a head knock which may result in any level of concussion, players should be sat out for the remainder of the game.

- ensure appropriate match day arrangements are put in place at our home grounds to facilitate timely access by emergency services
- not allow concussed players to return to training or scheduled matches before the minimum 12-day mandatory break, without prior medical clearance and a clearance from the current Football Director
- maintain accurate club reporting and recording of concussion related incidents. In the event of an incident and correct reporting not being completed, a player who has suffered a concussion or is suspected of having a concussion, must be medically assessed face to face as soon as possible and follow the return to play following concussion guidelines (as outlined Schedule 37 Management of Sports Related Concussion in Australian Football)
- Where there is no medic present to assess the player, or the diagnosis of concussion cannot be ruled out at the time of injury, the player must **NOT** be allowed to return to play in the same match / training session. Any player who has suffered a concussion or is suspected of having a concussion must be medically assessed face to face as soon as possible.
- All players will be individually approved to return to play by the current Football Director, decision will be based on the latest NFNL Concussion policy and Guidelines (See NFNL Schedule 37).
- The GJFC Committee will regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy and make any further changes or improvements as may be deemed necessary.

4. Related Policies and other documents

- NFNL Schedule 37. Concussion Policy and Guidelines. Management of Sports Related Concussion in Australian Football.

Purpose:

The NFNL is committed to the health and safety of all participants who play/participate in Australian Rules football. The AFL Doctors Association has produced guidelines for community football. These guidelines will continue to evolve as new evidence is made available to ensure best practice.

The Issue:

The game of Australian Football is a contact sport that involves high flying marks, extraordinary skills, and exhilarating tackles. The rules of Australian Football have always had a focus on protecting the safety of players, with the most important

body part being a player's head. The 'high contact' rule aims to minimise the frequency in which players receive contact to their head that may lead to brain injuries.

Concussion is a brain injury that occurs from impact to a player's head, either through collision with another player (which includes whiplash from body contact) or with the ground. Whilst the skull is in place to protect the brain, in a high impact collision, the brain can move back and forward within the skull causing temporary dysfunction.

Concussion is not always an immediate injury, and sometimes the symptoms may not present themselves until hours after the initial impact. Some concussion symptoms may include:

- Difficulty staying awake.
- Headaches or migraines
- Forgetfulness or memory problems
- Vomiting
- General unwell feeling or feeling a bit 'off'.
- Dizziness
- Confusion, slurred speech, or unusual behaviour
- Blurred or double vision

The appropriate management of concussion is essential in ensuring the brain has enough time to heal and recover. Therefore, anyone who experiences concussion type symptoms are encouraged to seek medical advice from their doctor on how best to manage the injury. If any deterioration is observed, transport to an accident or emergency department should occur as soon as possible.

It is crucial that anyone with a diagnosed concussion does not immediately return to play.

As a temporary brain dysfunction, concussion will resolve with time. This may vary from an hour or so, to several days. Occasionally the brain will recover even more slowly. The best treatment is rest from physical activity and work/study. The player should be seen by a doctor who will monitor the symptoms, signs and brain function.

The doctor must clear the player to return to sporting activity and this will usually involve a stepped approach with a gradual increase in activities over a few days. The

doctor may arrange a specialist's opinion (if the concussion is slow to resolve) or cognitive testing (brain functioning). If at any stage, the symptoms or signs are getting worse, seek urgent medical attention.

The Guidelines (Refer also to Community Concussion Guidelines below)

The guidelines are for trainers, first-aid providers, coaches, umpires, club officials and parents and should be understood and followed by all parties for the benefit and welfare of the players.

Head impacts can be associated with serious and potentially fatal brain injuries. In the early stages of injury, it is often not clear whether you are dealing with a concussion or there is a more severe underlying structural head injury. For this reason, the most important steps in initial management include:

1. Recognising a suspected concussion.
2. Removing the player from the game; and
3. Referring the player to a medical doctor for assessment.

Any player who has suffered a concussion or is suspected of having a concussion (i.e. in cases where there is no medical doctor present to assess the player or the diagnosis of concussion cannot be ruled out at the time of injury) must be medically assessed as soon as possible after the injury and must **NOT** be allowed to return to play in the same game/practice session. There should be an accredited first aider at every game and the basic rules of first aid should be used when dealing with any player who is unconscious or injured.

It is recommended that all trainers have the AFL approved concussion management app 'Head Check' downloaded on their phone to be utilized to recognize and assist in the management of any suspected concussion for both adults and children.

<https://www.headcheck.com.au/>

Return to Training and Playing Guidelines for players following a Concussion:

Important steps for return to play following concussion include:

- i. A brief period of complete physical and cognitive rest (24-48 hours):
- ii. A period of symptom-limited activity to allow FULL RECOVERY: and
- iii. A graded loading program (with monitoring).
- iv. Clearance by a medical doctor.

Players should NOT enter the graded loading program until they have recovered from their concussion. Recovery means that ALL concussion-related symptoms and signs have fully resolved (for at least 24 hours) at rest and with activities of daily living, and they have successfully returned to work or school, without restrictions.

In addition to the processes outlined in this document, any concussed player must NOT return to competitive contact sport (including full contact training sessions) before having moved through the graded recovery process (accessed via website below) and obtained medical clearance.

The earliest that a player may return to play (once they have successfully completed a graded loading program and had it signed off with medical clearance) is on the **12th** day after the day on which the concussion was suffered.

Please access the Return to Play Following Concussion – Medical Clearance Form via
<https://www.afl.com.au/clubhelp/policies/health-and-safety/concussion-management>

Additional Resources:

Head Check Concussion
<https://www.headcheck.com.au>

Management- Concussion Management Guidelines
<http://nfnl.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Schedule-37-Management-of-Sport-Related-Concussion-in-Australian-Football.pdf>

5. Modification and Review

- The contents of this document represent the current policy and procedures of GJFC.
- This policy is subject to a review every 2 years and will be amended appropriately.
- Amendments will be communicated to members as and when appropriate, to ensure that it remains current.

Version control

Version	Date	Description	Reference
0.1	12 November 2018	Draft provided by President	
0.2	17 May 2022	Approved by President and Committee	

APPROVAL

Approved by the GJFC Committee

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President

Name: Andrew Cleary

Date: 17 May 2022