



Cross Country Ski Ontario Concussion Management /Safe Return to Play Policy

(Adapted from <http://www.parachutecanada.org/resources>)

Concussions in cross country skiing are rare, but can occur while participating in any sport or recreational activity. In our sport competitors are especially vulnerable during dryland training, in particular roller skiing, and when skiing at significant speeds. All members must adhere to the Cross Country Ski de Fond Canada roller skiing policy <http://ccski.com/getmedia/92ece87e-05d8-430e-9403-94758655a923/215RollerSkiingPolicy-April2012.pdf.aspx>.

Since the circumstances under which a concussion can be sustained are so varied, it's important for all coaches, parents and athletes to be aware of the signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs. The information provided is intended for information purposes only and is not intended to or constitute any medical advice.

Concussion 101

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on routine x-rays, CT scans, or MRIs. It affects the way a person may think and remember things, and can cause a variety of symptoms.

What causes a Concussion?

Any blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body which causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion.

What should you do if you suspect a possible concussion?

The athlete/person should stop skiing and/or training right away. If possible, the person with the suspected concussion should not be left alone on the trails.

How long will it take for someone to recover?

The signs and symptoms of a concussion often last for 7-10 days but may last much longer. In some cases, it may take many weeks or months to heal. A person who has had previous concussions may take longer to heal.

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What are the Symptoms and signs of concussion?

Thinking Problems	Athlete’s Complaints	Other Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not know the time, date, place, and other details of surroundings • General confusion • Cannot remember things that happened before or after the injury • Knocked out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Dizziness • Feels dazed • Feels “dinged” or “stunned”; “having my bell rung” • Sees stars, flashing lights • Ringing in the ears • Sleepiness • Loss of vision • Sees double or blurry • Stomach ache or pain, nausea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor coordination or balance • Blank stare/glassy eyed • Vomiting • Slurred speech • Slow to answer questions or follow directions • Easily distracted • Poor concentration • Strange or inappropriate emotions (ie laughing, crying, getting mad easily)

Cross Country Ski Ontario provides this information on concussions as supplementary to any information provided by experts in the field of concussion management. All athletes, coaches, members are encouraged to become familiar with identifying concussions, identifying risks associated with our sport and follow safe play practices.

Concussion Management & Return to Play Procedures

1. If during a practice, training, camp, dryland or on snow, an athlete sustains a direct or indirect force to the head and subsequently exhibits signs, symptoms and/or functional changes consistent with a concussion, he/she is to be immediately removed from the activity and immediate medical assessment be provided. Coaches/officials/athletes are never to make a determination in the field on their own. (Please note this is not age dependent, all skiers, coaches, officials and volunteers must be treated in the same fashion).
2. Following their removal from the activity, any person suspected to have sustained a concussion is to be assessed by a medical doctor to determine the extent of the athlete’s injury and to rule out further pathology.
3. Individuals diagnosed with a concussion should follow their physicians guidance as well as rest until they are symptom-free and should then begin a step-wise symptom-limited program with

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stages of progression, only after they are without symptoms for a 24 hour period. Those steps include:

- Step 1: No Activity, only complete rest and no external stimuli. Once back to normal and cleared by a physician, go to step 2
- Step 2: Light aerobic exercise such as walking or stationary cycling.
- Step 3: Sport-specific exercise for about 20-30 minutes.
- Step 4: Increasing sport-specific exercise as long as symptom free
- Step 5: Return to higher intensity training and medium to heavy resistance training
- Step 6: Return to full training activity

Each step must take a minimum of one day. If the athlete has any symptoms of a concussion that come back at any step, STOP activity, wait for 24 – 48 hours, and resume activity at the previous step. The protocol must be individualized to the athlete/person and their injury.

Further Concussion Resources:

<http://www.parachutecanada.org/resources>

<http://www.coach.ca/concussion-awareness-s16361>

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