

Return-to-Sport Protocol

The following outlines a return-to-sport process **in accordance with Rowan's Law, The Gov. of Ont. & Canada Soccer**, 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 North York Cosmos S.C.](#)

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(s) 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. It is typically recommended that an athlete with concussion rest for 24 to 48 hours before beginning step 1.

	Activities	Goal of Step	Duration
Step 1: 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
Step 2: Light aerobic activity	Light activities such as walking or stationary bicycle at slow to medium pace for 10–15 minutes	Increase heart rate	At least 24 hours
Step 3: Sport-specific exercise	Individual physical activity such as running or skating No contact or head impact activities	Add movement	At least 24 hours
Step 4: Non-contact training, practice drills	Harder training drills Add resistance training (if appropriate)	Exercise, coordination and increased thinking	At least 24 hours
Step 5: 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
Step 6: 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(s) 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(s) 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). *(See North York Cosmos Policy for collection, disclosure and disposal of personal information).*