



# CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Presentation for  
Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations

Version: September 29, 2016  
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## **Concussion Management Program**

Freestyle Canada has an inherent responsibility to provide training and competition venues and skill development practices that ensure the athlete's health and safety. The National Sport Organization ("NSO") has created multiple policies and programs that provide guidance to Provincial / Territorial Sport Organizations ("PTSO") and member clubs how to prepare terrain, manage training and competition venue and competently teach athletes freestyle skiing skills. These policies and programs are the bedrock of our athlete development system and form an integral part of the Freestyle Canada's risk management program.

Freestyle skiing is considered a high-risk sport for concussions. A comprehensive concussion management program is important to ensure all Freestyle Canada athletes are safe and the management of a concussion is undertaken to ensure the athletes' safe return to skiing.

The Concussion Management Program applies to every level of Freestyle Canada - NSO, PTSO and Club – and to every member of the Association. Every member, including athletes, coaches, officials, parents and volunteers, has a responsibility to ensure athletes, in particular, are monitored for suspected concussions and during the return to play process and that the athletes return to play only when they are healthy enough. Athletes don't return from physical injuries before they are healed, why should it be any different for concussed athletes?

The concussion management program takes into consideration:

1. Policy
2. Plans & Protocols

Six (6) main strategic areas are considered:

1. Prevention
2. Identification
3. Management
4. Access to Care
5. Communication
6. Surveillance

### **Concussion Policy (Appendix 1)**

The concussion policy is a document that provides the framework and guidance how Freestyle Canada will approach concussion management. The policy does not change often.

### **Concussion Action Plan (Appendix 2)**

The concussion action plan outlines the procedures to follow when an athlete has a suspected concussion (defined in policy). These are general steps to be taken and comply when Freestyle Canada's standard procedures.

A visual pathway for the concussion action plan is also provided.

## **Return to Play Protocol (Appendix 3)**

The Freestyle Canada Return To Play (“RTP”) protocol has been updated to current standards. There is a possibility the RTP protocol will be updated again following the international medical community’s meeting during the Autumn 2016 in Berlin where the international concussion standards will be discussed and updated. The Freestyle Canada RTP protocol is consistent with the international consensus on concussions from Zurich 2012.

## **Implementation Plan (Appendix 4)**

The concussion management program will be implemented over two seasons, including 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. There are several mandatory steps for coaches that must followed in 2016-2017. Full compliance with the concussion management program is expected by March 31, 2018.

## **Six Strategic Areas**

### *1. Prevention*

The best way to mitigate concussions is to avoid them from happening in the first place. Freestyle Canada’s prevention strategies include:

- Terrain guidelines
- Competition guidelines
- Coach education on proper skill development
- Officials education on the proper preparation of competition venues
- Educating athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and parents about concussions and how to identify and manage them.

### *2. Identification*

Identifying a suspected concussion is critical for the proper treatment of concussions. Educational opportunities are important to teach athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and parents about the signs of a concussion. Freestyle Canada uses two main educational tools:

- Coaching Association of Canada’s “*Making Head Way*” on-line training, which is free and specifically tailored to freestyle skiing
- Complete Concussion Management International’s (“CCMI”) “*Sideline*” course.

All National Coaching Certification Program (“NCCP”) trained or certified coaches who hold a Freestyle Canada coaching license will be required to complete “*Making Head Way*” by December 31, 2016.

The implementation of CCMI “*Sideline*” training will be piloted and recommended for 2016-2017 and become mandatory in 2017-2018 for Freestyle Canada licensed coaches who have athletes competing at the Canada Cup level of events or higher (e.g. NorAms).

All Freestyle Canada technical delegates assigned to Canada Cup or higher events will be required to complete “*Making Head Way*” no later than December 31, 2016.

### 3. *Management*

Management of a suspected concussion is very important and the RTP protocol is to be followed. In addition to following the RTP protocol, participating in baseline testing during the preseason will assist with the return to play management process. Baseline testing will provide a “baseline” or “normal” profile and the goal of the RTP protocol is to return the athlete to the normal profile before the athlete returns to training or competition, on or off the snow. There is a cost for baseline testing, but this is an important component of the concussion management process and ensuring the health and safety of Freestyle Canada athletes.

The concussion management process must include a medical doctor who will provide ultimate oversight of the athlete’s recovery. The medical doctor must be consulted at the start of the recovery process and only a medical doctor may provide a written medical clearance letter for the athlete to return to training or competition.

### 4. *Access to Care*

Freestyle Canada will provide access to information how athletes and their families may locate an experienced medical doctor who is familiar with concussions. The NSO is not responsible for arranging medical visits nor managing or monitoring the athlete’s treatment.

Freestyle Canada is partnering with CCMI to provide ongoing concussion management services to Freestyle Canada members. CCMI provides leading edge baseline testing, access to trained therapists and medical doctors, and maintains a national database that can track and monitor athlete concussions. CCMI has service providers across Canada.

### 5. *Communication*

The NSO, all PTSOs and every club has a responsibility to ensure Freestyle Canada’s policies and protocols are communicated to our members and strongly encourage athletes and parents, specifically, to take training and learn about concussions. Athletes and parents have access to CAC’s “*Making Head Way*”, which is a free on-line training tool specifically designed for freestyle skiing.

The NSO will ensure there is broad communication about our concussion policies and protocols through our social media channels.

In this way, with every taking responsibility for spreading the word that more people need to learn about concussions, we can better protect our athletes and ensure they follow a proper treatment to return safely to training and competition.

### 6. *Surveillance*

Freestyle Canada needs to collect more accurate information about the rate of concussions within the freestyle skiing community. The collection

of this data is critical to ensuring we are providing the best practices to serve our community.

CCMI provides a national database, linked to every CCMI accredited facility, so there is a common portal for practitioners involved in the management of concussions to access information on an athlete from one location. This will ensure the quality of care is improved.

Accident reporting is also a critical component for the NSO to track the incident of concussions and to determine the effectiveness of our concussion management program over time. Every coach and organizing bears the responsibility to promptly notify the NSO of any concussion, or any injury, for that matter.

The health and safety of our athletes is the most important responsibility we have as an association. Concussions can have negative life-long implications for athletes, not only impacting skiing, but school, work, family and general quality of life. The proper prevention, identification and management of concussions are key for maintaining healthy athletes.

Avoiding the identification of a concussion, encouraging athletes to ski with concussions, returning to early to skiing or training from a concussion or remaining uninformed about concussions will not be tolerated. Our duty as Freestyle Canada – as NSO, PTSO and Club – is to actively promote a positive culture of concerning concussions.

The concussion management program is a step in this direction and the collaborative work of everyone within the Freestyle Canada family will ensure will continuously learn to improve our management of concussions and ensure the health and safety of our athletes.

**Policy Type:** Health and Safety  
**Policy Title:** Concussion  
**Authority:** Chief Executive Officer  
**Limitation:** Subject to Provincial or Federal Legislation

## 1.1 Policy Statement

Freestyle Canada recognizes that participation in freestyle skiing has an inherent amount of risk that may lead to head injuries and concussions. The purpose of this policy statement is to outline in broad terms the objectives to be achieved by the policy.

The policy applies to all members of the Freestyle Canada, including individuals, clubs and Provincial Sport Organizations (PSO).

The policy recognizes certain jurisdictions across Canada have legislation that govern the management of concussions within their jurisdiction in development or that has received royal assent. Government legislation supersedes this policy.

This document is designed to provide guidance to Freestyle Canada members responsible for operating, regulating or planning Freestyle Canada sanctioned activities with a risk of concussion to participants in the development, establishment and implementation of policies, procedures and programs for the prevention, treatment, and education of sport-related concussions and head injuries.

## 1.2 Concussion Policy

Freestyle Canada is committed to maintaining the health of its members and believes that participating in the sanctioned activities organized by Freestyle Canada can lead to better health. Freestyle Canada recognizes that concussions are a significant public health issue because of their potential short- and long-term consequences. Freestyle Canada enacts this policy and related protocols as tools to help prevent, recognize and properly treat concussions that may occur while participating in Freestyle Canada sanctioned activities.

CFSa members will follow all treatment protocols and return to play protocols.

**The proper treatment of a concussion is more important than participation in any sport/activity/work/school during the healing process.**

## 1.3 Definitions

In this policy,

(a) **Concussion** means the definition of concussion from the 2012 Zurich consensus statement on concussion in sport:

*Concussion is a brain injury and is defined as a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces<sup>1</sup>.*

In plain language, a concussion:

- Is a brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g. headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g., difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioural (e.g., depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g., drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep);

- May be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull;
- Can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness); and,
- Cannot normally be seen on x-rays, standard CT scans or MRIs.

**(b) Suspected Concussion** means the recognition that an individual appears to have either experienced an injury or impact that may result in a concussion, or is exhibiting unusual behaviour that may be the result of concussion.

**(c) Concussion Diagnosis** means a clinical diagnosis made by a medical doctor. It is critical that an individual with a suspected concussion be examined by a medical doctor..

#### 1.4 Policy Objective

The objective of this policy is to protect the short-term and long-term health and safety of CFSA members who may have a suspected concussion or have received a concussion diagnosis.

#### 1.5 Authority Levels

*National Sport Organization (NSO):* Developing policy, including Return To Play protocols, that guide the management of concussions for member PSOs and clubs; collecting data and reporting on the incident of concussions; participating in multi-disciplinary working groups on concussions; ensuring compliance with policy; developing of education materials.

*Provincial Sport Organizations (PSO):* Developing of PSO specific concussion policies that conform with Provincial legislation or guidelines and Freestyle Canada policies; implementing concussion education with PSO individual members and clubs; maintaining records for athlete concussions, including medical clearance letters; annually reporting on concussions to NSO.

*Member Clubs:* Ensuring coaches are properly trained on concussions; actively promoting concussion education with clubs athletes, officials, volunteers and parents; reporting all incidents of suspected concussions to PSO; ensuring athletes have proper medical clearance letters to return to play (training or competition, on or off snow); providing PSO with medical clearance letters.

#### 1.6 Stages of Concussion Management

In order to achieve the policy objective, the policy outlines direction for prevention, identification, management, access to care, communication, surveillance of concussions and policy review.

##### **(a) Prevention: Ensuring Safe Play - Concussion Prevention Strategies**

The incident of concussions can be mitigated by the proper implementation of prevention strategies by ensuring coaches, officials and parents are properly educated about concussions, Freestyle Canada terrain guideline policies and procedures are followed at all times and that training and competition venues are properly prepared and free of obstacles.

##### *Education*

Education is the first line of defense to managing the risk of concussions.

Freestyle Canada will provide access to annual concussion educational information to every athlete, official, coach and parent prior to the beginning of each season. Freestyle Canada will publish this policy and any concussion management protocols to its website. Freestyle Canada will provide CFSA members, clubs and PSOs with an annual update on its concussion management policy. This will be provided through email, social media, website and educational courses

Freestyle Canada coaches and officials will be required to participate in annual concussion education as prescribed by Freestyle Canada. Freestyle Canada educational materials will meet with guidelines agreed to by Canadian sport community. Education will include:

- Physiology of a concussion
- Early recognition of signs and symptoms of a concussion
- Sport injury culture
- Sport-specific concussion prevention strategy
- Concussion Action Plan (CAP) Protocol
- Return to learn/work protocol following a concussion
- Return to play protocol following a concussion.

#### *Terrain and Competition Policies and Procedures*

Freestyle Canada has developed terrain and facility guidelines and competition guidelines that provide direction on the type of terrain to be used for specific skills levels and how competition and training venues should be prepared to provide the maximum amount of safety to Freestyle Canada members.

Freestyle Canada requires that all Freestyle Canada sanctioned activities follow the Freestyle Canada policies and procedures and that the policies and procedures will be consistently enforced in order to effectively ensure safe play.

#### *Helmets*

Freestyle Canada requires helmets to be worn by CFSA Members who are licensed athletes or individuals who are demonstrating skills in a competition or training venue. Mouth guards are recommended.

Sport-specific concussion prevention strategies as outlined in **[Name of Document]** will be implemented for all Freestyle Canada sanctioned activities.

#### **(b) Identification – Using the Concussion Action Plan (CAP)**

Early identification of a suspected concussion is important to properly manage a suspected concussion.

#### *Who can identify a suspected concussion*

Any individual who has completed the appropriate concussion education may help identify a suspected concussion. This can include, but not limited to, athletes (self report or team mates), coaches, parents, health care professional, and officials.

#### *Identification of Suspected Concussion*

Freestyle Canada requires that a Concussion Action Plan (CAP) be available and implemented at all Freestyle Canada sanctioned activities and events in case of a concussion or suspected concussion.

A Concussion Action Plan (CAP) outlines a general set of steps that will allow proper care for athletes when a suspected concussion occurs and will provide appropriate direction to all individuals. The CAP will include:

- Actions to take when concussion is suspected following an incident.
- Defining who has the authority to determine if a suspected concussion is presented.
- Defining the authority to prohibit an individual from continuing to train or compete in a Freestyle Canada sanctioned activity.
- Outlining the necessary steps to inform the individual's coach and parents (or guardians).
- Defining the steps to inform Freestyle Canada.
- Defining the necessary steps to seek medical care following a suspected concussion.

#### *Documentation of Incident*

Tracking the incidents of suspected concussions is a key component of the Freestyle Canada concussion policy.

Freestyle Canada will use the Freestyle Canada Accident Report to record the details of the incident to the National Sport Organization. The accident report will record the date, time, location, weather conditions, course conditions and describe the mechanics of the incident.

The Freestyle Canada Accident Report will be submitted to the NSO by the proper authority. If the incident occurs during training, the Coach will be required to submit the Freestyle Canada Accident Report within 48 hours of the incident. If the incident occurs during a competition, the Technical Delegate (or Event Organizer) will submit the Freestyle Canada Accident Report within 48 hours of the incident.

Freestyle Canada will follow up with the individual to determine if a physician has diagnosed concussion and request that a formal note from the physician be provided to Freestyle Canada.

#### **(c) Management**

CFSA members who lose consciousness as a result of accident will not be permitted to continue training or competing and must be advised to seek medical attention immediately.

CFSA members who have a suspected concussion must seek medical attention within 48 hours.

Freestyle Canada will not be responsible for monitoring the individual's recovery from a Concussion Diagnosis. Monitoring of the individual's recovery is the responsibility of the individual, the individual's family, the individual's freestyle skiing club or coach, if the individual is not a member of a freestyle skiing club, and under the direct advice from the individual's physician.

Information regarding the individual's recovery should be recorded and be accessible if the individual is to ever sustain another concussion. Responsibility for keeping records of the recovery is the responsibility of the individual.

The importance of monitoring recovery and following the necessary steps under Freestyle Canada's Return to Play Protocol is important to ensure the athlete safely returns to play and is

fully recovered from the diagnosed concussion.

The individual's recovery must be guided by a medical doctor..

*Return to Play [SEE RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL]*

Individuals are not permitted to participate in Freestyle Canada sanctioned activities for training and competition once a concussion diagnosis has been determined.

Individuals must have Returned to Learn / Work and be asymptomatic and completed all of the necessary steps of Freestyle Canada's Return to Play protocol before they can return to Freestyle Canada sanctioned activities for training or competition.

Individuals will only be allowed to return to Freestyle Canada sanctioned activities for training or competition only upon the presentation of written medical clearance provided by a physician to the CFSA.

**(d) Access to Care**

Freestyle Canada will provide resources to CFSA Members on how they make access the appropriate medical care for a suspected concussion.

**(e) Communication**

The individual, the individual's family, coach and medical professionals must communicate regularly with each other during the recovery process. The coordinated efforts to ensure the proper care and recovery steps are taken will ensure the individual returns to play when fully recovered.

**(f) Surveillance**

Freestyle Canada will determine appropriate methods to collect information regarding suspected concussions, concussion diagnoses and return to play. Data will be reported in an aggregated format without personal identification of any individual.

Data collected will be used to monitoring the impact of Freestyle Canada's concussion policy and programs and inform ongoing development of these policies.

**(g) Policy Review**

Freestyle Canada will review this policy on an annual basis.

**1.7 Government Policies and Regulations**

Government of Ontario:

- Ministry of Education (English): <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/158.pdf>
- Ministry of Education (French): <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/fre/ppm/158f.pdf>
- Rowan's Law: [http://www.ontla.on.ca/bills/bills-files/41\\_Parliament/Session1/b149ra.pdf](http://www.ontla.on.ca/bills/bills-files/41_Parliament/Session1/b149ra.pdf)

**1.8 Stages of Concussion Management and Associated Documents**

## Education

- Complete Concussion Management: <https://completeconcussions.com/>
- Coaching Association of Canada – Making Headway: <http://www.coach.ca/-p153487>
- Parachute Canada: <http://parachutecanada.org/concussion>
- Institut nationale d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux: <http://fecst.inesss.qc.ca/en/documentation/publications.html>
- Alberta Concussion Alliance: <http://www.sportmedab.ca/content.php?id=1745>
- Canadian Concussion Collaborative: <http://casem-acmse.org/education/cccl/>
- BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit: <http://www.cattonline.com/>

## Prevention

- Freestyle Canada Concussion Action Plan policy

## Management Procedures for a Diagnosed Concussion

- Freestyle Canada Return to Play Guidelines (English): <http://freestyleski.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CFSA-RTP-Guidelines-Making-Headway-Final.pdf>
- Freestyle Canada Return to Play Guidelines (French): <http://freestyleski.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CFSA-RTP-Guidelines-Making-Headway-Final-FR.pdf>

## **1.9 Stages of Concussion Management and Associated Documents**

Approved by Freestyle Canada Board of Directors: October 22, 2016

**Policy Type:** Health and Safety  
**Policy Title:** Concussion Action Plan  
**Authority:** Chief Executive Officer  
**Limitation:** None

### 1) **Policy Statement**

This policy is supplemental to Freestyle Canada's "Concussion Policy" and applies to all Freestyle Canada members, including individuals, clubs and Provincial Sport Organizations.

### 2) **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the recommended steps to take when an individual has an incident where she or he may have a suspected concussion.

### 3) **Application**

While participating in the sport of freestyle skiing, participants have an inherent risk of sustaining a concussion. The application of this policy provides guidance on the prevention, identification and management of incidents of concussion during Freestyle Canada sanctioned activities.

All Freestyle Canada sanctioned activities must have a Concussion Action Plan prepared and ready for implementation. The CFSA Member Club requesting the activity sanction is responsible for preparing the Concussion Action Plan and communicating this plan to their athletes, the athletes' parents or guardians, coaches, officials and any volunteer who is supporting the sanctioned activity.

The Concussion Action Plan must conform to this policy.

#### i) *Prevention*

Coaches have a primary responsibility to ensure the training and competition venue is safe for their athletes to train or compete. Coaches are advocates for their athletes and must ensure the training or competition venue is properly prepared and suited to their athletes' level of ability. If the venue is not properly prepared, the coaches have a duty of care to prohibit their athletes' from using the facility until such time as the venue meets the Freestyle Canada standards of venue preparation.

Course builders and other competition officials (e.g. Chief of Course, Chief of Competition or Technical Delegate) have a responsibility to ensure training and competition venues are prepared according to Freestyle Canada's terrain guidelines and competition guidelines. They also have the responsibility to ensure the venue is properly maintained during official training and competition.

Local Organizing Committees are advised to have a trained medical professional at the competition venue to assist with determining if an athlete has a suspected concussion. Local Organizing Committees for Canada Cup competitions, Canadian Championships, FIS sanctioned events, or FIS Freestyle NorAm Cups must have a Chief Medical Officer who is a qualified medical professional (e.g. physician, therapist) at the venue during official training and competition.

#### ii) *Identification*

Recommended and Required Education

- All coaches and Technical Delegates must be appropriately trained to recognize the signs of concussion and to act immediately if they believe an athlete has a suspected concussion.
- All coaches and Technical Delegates must complete:
  - Coaching Association of Canada's "Making Headway" on-line concussion module.
- Coaches who train athletes in Freestyle Canada's High Performance Athlete Development Program and Technical Delegates for Canada Cup competitions, Canadian Championships, FIS Freestyle Ski sanctioned events, FIS Freestyle Ski NorAm Cups, and FIS Freestyle Ski World cups must complete:
  - Complete Concussion Management International "Sideline" on-line course
- "Making Headway" and "Sideline" are available free of charge:
  - Making Headway: <http://www.coach.ca/-p153487>
  - Sideline: <https://completeconcussions.com/concussion-sideline-course-coaches-trainers-school-teachers/>

#### Incidents during Training

- Coaches are responsible for monitoring their athletes' health and safety during training.
- If an athlete has an incident that may result in a possible concussion, the coach is responsible for assessing the athlete for a suspected concussion.
- If the athlete has a suspected concussion, the athlete must stop training immediately and seek medical treatment.

#### Incidents during Competition

- Coaches are responsible for monitoring their athletes' health and safety during training.
- If an athlete has an incident that may result in a suspected concussion, the coach is responsible for ensuring the athlete is assessed for a suspected concussion.
- Technical Delegates have the responsibility and the authority to ask for an independent assessment of an athlete if she or he suspects the athlete may have a suspected concussion.
- Technical Delegates may require an athlete to be assessed by the Chief Medical Officer to determine if there is a suspected concussion.
- The Technical Delegate, on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer, may advise the Competition Jury to prohibit an athlete from competing or training if the athlete has a suspected concussion when determined by the Chief Medical Officer.
- Only the Competition Jury can remove an athlete from competition.
- If the athlete has a suspected concussion, the athlete must be removed from competition immediately and seek medical treatment.

### iii) *Management*

#### When an athlete has a suspected concussion:

- The athlete's parent or guardian must be informed immediately. The athletes' coach or team manager is responsible for notifying the athlete's parents.
- The athlete is to be removed immediately from training or competition and seek medical treatment.
- The coach or Local Organizing Committee (if the suspected concussion occurred during a competition) must complete the Freestyle Canada Accident Report Form and forward it immediately to Freestyle Canada (at [info@freestyleski.com](mailto:info@freestyleski.com)).
- Once the athlete receives medical treatment for a suspected concussion:

- If the physician determines the athlete **does not** have a concussion, the athlete may return to training or competition. The physician must provide written medical clearance stating the athlete is asymptomatic of a concussion.
- If the physician determines the athlete **does** have a concussion, the athlete must begin the Freestyle Canada Return to Play Protocol (<http://freestyleski.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CFSA-RTP-Guidelines-Making-Headway-Final.pdf>). The athlete will not be permitted to train or compete if a concussion diagnosis has been determined.
  - Freestyle Canada is to be notified by the athlete or his or her family that the athlete has been diagnosed with a concussion and provide Freestyle Canada with a letter from the athlete's physician confirming the diagnosed concussion.
  - Freestyle Canada will keep a record on file of this diagnosis.
- Refer to Concussion Action Plan flow chart (see Appendix A)

iv) *Return to Play*

Athletes who have been diagnosed with a concussion must follow Freestyle Canada's Return to Play protocol (<http://freestyleski.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CFSA-RTP-Guidelines-Making-Headway-Final.pdf>).

The athlete may only return to training and competition:

- When the athlete is asymptomatic at each stage of the Return to Play protocol in accordance with protocol's guidelines.
- When diagnosed by a physician that the athlete is asymptomatic of a concussion.
- By securing a written medical clearance letter by a physician that states the athlete may return to training or competition.
- By providing Freestyle Canada with a copy of the medical clearance letter by sending the letter to [info@freestyleski.com](mailto:info@freestyleski.com)
- When Freestyle Canada notes in its database the athlete is approved to return to training and competition.

v) *Return to Competition*

Local Organizing Committees of Canada Cup events, Canadian Championships, FIS sanctioned events and FIS Freestyle Skiing NorAm Cup competitions will be notified via email by Freestyle Canada when an athlete is ineligible to compete due to a diagnosed concussion.

Local Organizing Committees must deny entry to the competition to any athlete whom Freestyle Canada has listed as an athlete with a diagnosed concussion.

Local Organizing Committees may only permit the entry to the competition an athlete whom Freestyle Canada has listed as an athlete with a diagnosed concussion only when Freestyle Canada provides written notice to the Local Organizing Committee that the athlete is eligible to compete.

#### 4) **Implementation**

##### Season 2016-2017

- Mandatory completion of Making Head Way module by December 31, 2016 for all FC Licensed Coaches and NCCP trained or certified coaches
- Mandatory completion of Making Head Way module by December 31, 2016 for all FC Technical Delegates assigned to Canada Cup, FIS Events, FIS NorAms and Canadian Championships.

- All FC High Performance Program and High Performance Athlete Development Program coaches complete Making Head Way and CCMi Sideline.
- Recommended Technical Delegates complete CCMi Sideline Module
- Recommended Local Organizing Committees for Canada Cup and Canadian Championships assign a Chief Medical Officer to the event for official training and competition days.
- Freestyle Canada Accident Report Form and member database is updated to capture data for suspected concussions, diagnosed concussions and Return to Play.
- Pilot project with selected PSOs to implement CCMi program integration including baseline testing of athletes competing at Canada Cup level of events.

#### Season 2017-2018

- Mandatory completion of Making Head Way module by December 31, 2017 for all FC Licensed Coaches and NCCP trained or certified coaches.
- Mandatory completion of Making Head Way module by December 31, 2017 for all FC Technical Delegates assigned to Canada Cup, FIS Events, FIS NorAms and Canadian Championships.
- Mandatory completion of CCMi Sideline module by December 31, 2017 for all FC High Performance Program and High Athlete Develop Program coaches, all FC license and NCCP trained or certified coaches with athletes competing at Canada Cup or high level of competition and FC Technical Delegates.
- All Local Organizing Committees for Canada Cup and Canadian Championships must assign a Chief Medical Officer to the event for official training and competition days.
- Mandatory CCMi baseline testing for all FC licensed athletes competing at Canada Cup or high level of competition completed by September 30, 2017.
- Mandatory reporting to NSO of suspected concussions and filing medical clearance letters.

#### 5) **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

#### 6) **Resources**

There are many resources available to education athletes, coaches, parents, officials and volunteers. Please find below links to a variety of these resources (select list).

- Complete Concussion Management: <https://completeconcussions.com/>
- Coaching Association of Canada – Making Headway: <http://www.coach.ca/-p153487>
- Parachute Canada: <http://parachutecanada.org/concussion>
- Institut nationale d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux: <http://fecst.inesss.qc.ca/en/documentation/publications.html>
- Alberta Concussion Alliance: <http://www.sportmedab.ca/content.php?id=1745>
- Canadian Concussion Collaborative: <http://casem-acmse.org/education/ccc/>
- BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit: <http://www.catonline.com/>

#### Sport Specific Guidelines:

- Return to Play: (<http://freestyleski.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CFSA-RTP-Guidelines-Making-Headway-Final.pdf>).
- Terrain Guidelines:
- Terrain Park and Rail Usage Guidelines: <http://www.freestyleski.com/html/en/memberservices/documents/CFSATerrainParkRailPolicyEN.pdf>

#### 7) **Approval**

Approved by Board of Directors: October 22, 2016  
Version Control: September 28, 2016



## **FREESTYLE CANADA**

### **CONCUSSION PROTOCOL & GUIDELINES for Provincial & Club Programs**

#### **DEFINITION OF CONCUSSION:**

A concussion is an alteration of the normal function of the brain induced by trauma. This trauma may be in the form of a direct blow or rotational forces resulting in a rapid acceleration/deceleration of the brain within the skull. Concussion is often difficult to recognize, as some athletes do not complain of symptoms. Symptoms may include any or all of: headache, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, sensitivity to light or noise, decreased memory, difficulty with concentration, mental sluggishness, anxiety, irritability or poor appetite. Loss of consciousness is not required to have a concussion; in fact most concussions are not associated with a loss of consciousness.

#### **WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE?**

A concussion is important to recognize so the brain can be given adequate time to rest and heal following injury. If an athlete returns to training or competition too early, symptoms may become prolonged and put the athlete at risk for a second concussion or other significant injury. Concussion diagnosis can be challenging as concussion symptoms can be vague. We often rely on the athlete to report the injury, which may not happen if the athlete is concussed and not processing information properly. This is why it is so important the coach, therapist or doctor to recognize a possible concussion and give the appropriate advice to the athlete.

#### **PRESEASON TESTING**

All athletes should complete a neurocognitive test prior to the season. The CCMI test is one example of a neurocognitive test, but there are others. These tests provide a valuable baseline for the ongoing evaluation of an athlete who has a concussion that is slow to resolve. The test is best suited for athletes >16 years of age. Follow-up neurocognitive testing is only done once the athlete is symptom free, and return to skiing/training is being considered.

#### **THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS**

Any athlete with suspected concussive symptoms should be removed from training or competition by the coach, therapist or doctor for an on-site assessment. If there is any concern about the possibility of a concussion, the athlete should be removed from further activity and may not return to any training prior to clearance by a medical doctor with experience in concussion management. An athlete who has sustained a suspected concussion is not to return to any aerobic or sport activity without the written consent of a physician.

#### **INITIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE CONCUSSION**

The athlete should not be left alone in the first few hours. The initial treatment is rest until the complete resolution of symptoms. This includes both physical and cognitive, or mental rest. Athletes should therefore have a quiet environment and avoid excessive exposure to stimulation such as television, computer, video games or text messaging.

Athletes should completely abstain from alcohol. Medications may be used if recommended by a medical professional. It should be recognized that analgesic or anti-inflammatory medications may mask some of the symptoms of concussion. A doctor will determine whether any other tests such as CT or MRI are warranted.

#### **RETURN TO PLAY**

The Return To Play Progression for freestyle skiing can begin once the athlete has been off all medications and completely symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours. In cases where symptoms have persisted for many weeks or more, it may be necessary to be symptom free for a longer period of time before beginning the RTP process. Any athlete with prolonged symptoms should have their return to play supervised by a physician with experience with traumatic brain injuries.

## RETURN TO PLAY PROGRESSION FOR FREESTYLE SKIING

**This is a step-wise process, each step being separated by a minimum of 24 hours. Progression to the next step only occurs if the athlete is completely asymptomatic at the current level. With any recurrence of concussive symptoms, the athlete should drop back to the previous asymptomatic level.**

STEP	ACTIVITY LEVEL	FREESTYLE SKI CONTEXT	Symptoms Present?	
			Yes	No
1	No activity, only complete rest.	Limit school, work and tasks requiring concentration. Refrain from physical activity until symptoms are gone.		A physician, should be consulted before moving to step 2
2	Light aerobic exercise.	<p>Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. Someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs should supervise the player. No resistance training or weight lifting. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day.</p> <p>Follow this 2-step process with 24 hours of rest between each step.</p> <p>a) Step 1 - 15 minutes on stationary bicycle, rest 24 hrs. If symptom free go to step 2                      b) Step 2 - 60 minutes of more aggressive cardio work (75% of max Heart Rate) such as bike or jogging.</p>	<p>Return to rest and step 1 until symptoms have resolved.</p> <p>If symptoms persist, consult a physician.</p>	Proceed to Step 3 only if athlete is: asymptomatic after 60 minute cardio session
3	Sport specific activities	<p>Gentle skiing on flat, easy terrain. No jumping or jarring movements. No bouncing on trampolines.</p> <p>Continuous skiing for 60 minutes.</p>	<p>Return to rest until symptoms have resolved then resume at step 2.</p> <p>If symptoms persist, consult a physician.</p>	Proceed to Step 4 the next day if asymptomatic.
4	Begin Discipline Specific Drills (up to moderate intensity)	<p>60 minutes of continuous discipline-specific training (on or off snow)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skiing on moderate, terrain with moguls.</li> <li>- Skiing the halfpipe with small, easy jumps.</li> <li>- Riding "ability appropriate" boxes/rails</li> <li>- No big air tricks.</li> <li>- Small bouncing on trampoline or bounding drills.</li> </ul>	<p>Return to rest until symptoms have resolved then resume at step 3.</p> <p>If symptoms persist, consult a physician.</p>	<p>The time needed to progress from non-contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the player.</p> <p>Proceed to Step 5 with Medical Clearance Only.</p>
5	Begin Sport Specific Drills (up to full intensity)	Gradually increase the intensity of training to include all normal training activities.	<p>Return to rest until symptoms have resolved then resume at step 4</p> <p>If symptoms persist, consult a physician.</p>	Proceed to Step 6 the next day.
6	Game Play	Return to Competition		

**Never return to play if you still have symptoms!**

**A player who returns to active play before full recovery from the first concussion is**

**at high risk of sustaining another concussion, with symptoms that may be increased and prolonged.**

#### **HOW LONG DOES THIS PROCESS TAKE?**

With this protocol, it will take a minimum of one week following complete resolution of symptoms before an individual or athlete can return to his or her pre-injury level of activity. These step numbers do not correspond to number of days although most athletes with a concussion will typically progress through these steps over 7-10 days. If the concussion is severe or if the athlete has had multiple concussions, it may take many days to progress through one step.

#### **HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT DOCTOR?**

When dealing with concussions, it is important to see a doctor who is knowledgeable in concussion management. This might be your family doctors or someone such as a sports medicine specialist. To see a specialist, you sometimes need a referral from your family doctor.

Contact the Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine (CASEM) to find a sports medical physician in your area. **Visit [www.casm-acms.org](http://www.casm-acms.org) for more information.** You can also refer your doctor to the concussion pages of **[thinkfirst.ca](http://thinkfirst.ca)** for more information.

#### **WHO DO THESE GUIDELINES APPLY TO?**

These guidelines were developed for children over the age of 10; those younger may require special guidelines, and more conservative treatment and care. Return to Play Guidelines should be at the discretion of the physician.

#### **WHAT IF MY SYMPTOMS RETURN DURING THIS PROCESS?**

Sometimes concussion symptoms will return during the Return to Play steps. This means that the brain has not yet healed, and needs more rest. If any signs or symptoms return during the Return To Play process, they should stop the activity and rest until symptoms have resolved. The player must be re-evaluated by a physician before trying any activity again. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, not necessarily during the activity!

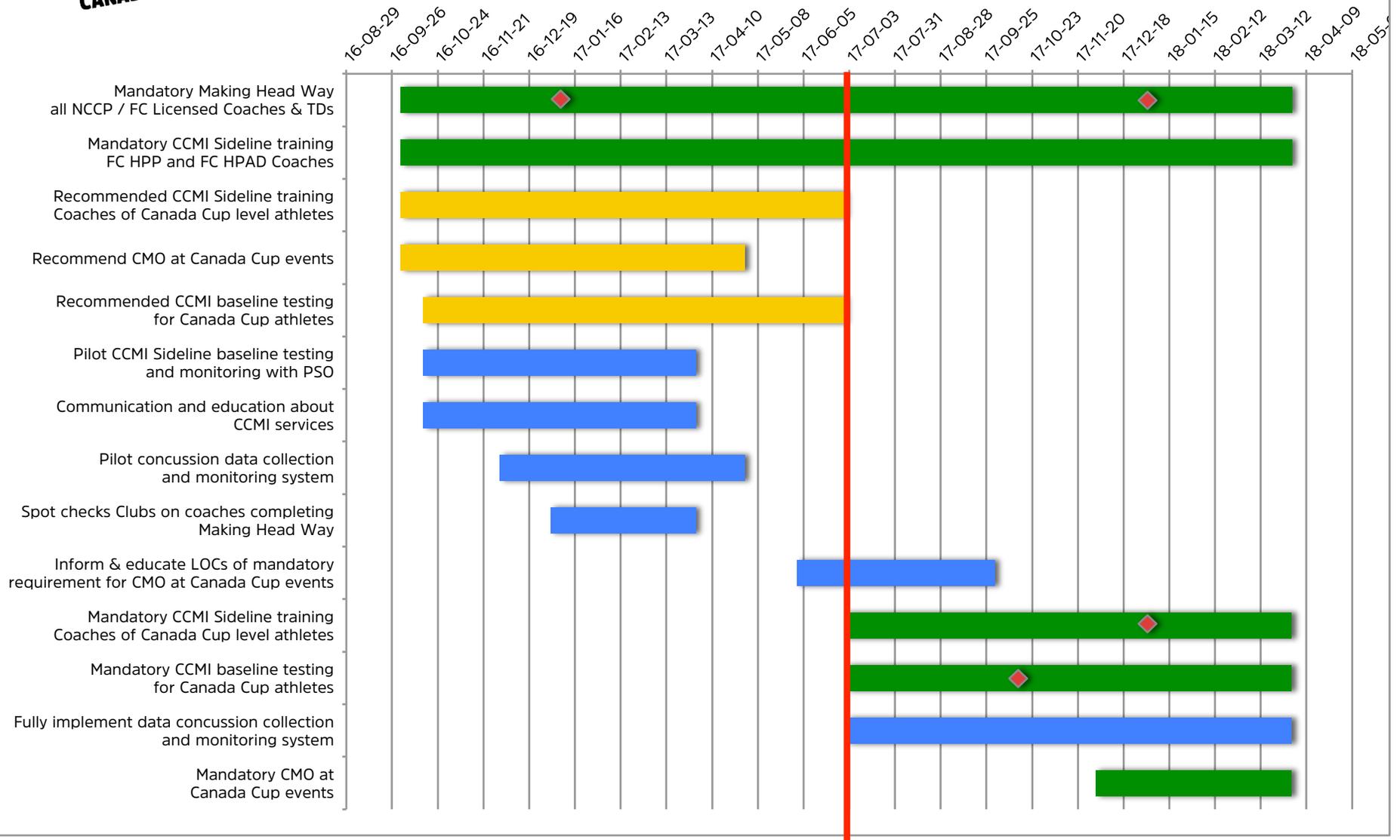
#### **CREDITS:**

The ThinkFirst Canada Concussion resources were developed based on the Zurich Guidelines outlined in the Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport and have been reviewed with great thanks to the ThinkFirst Concussion Education and Awareness Committee.

This protocol was prepared in conjunction with medical doctors from the Canadian Freestyle Ski Association's High Performance Program Integrated Support Team and is not intended for use by the CFSA High Performance Program.



# Concussion Program Management Implementation Plan



June 30, 2017

- Mandatory
- Recommended
- Learning & Communication
- Key Date