

Burlington City Rep Hockey Club

Concussion Policy

While we recognize that concussions cannot be fully prevented, education and training, as well as prompt and appropriate management, can better protect the health and well-being of our athletes, and potentially reduce the amount of playing time missed from subsequent concussions.

As such, **Burlington City Rep Hockey Club** has partnered with Shield Athletics and Sports Medicine to deliver concussion care and management for Eagles athletes. The partnership between the Eagles and Shield has allowed for full implementation and completion of an evidence-based concussion policy.

Policy

1. All athletes, Major Pee wee Division and up, are required to complete a comprehensive baseline test through Shield and HeadCheck prior to participation in any practice or game. Also, it is strongly recommended that all other divisions also undergo the comprehensive baseline testing.
 - a. Baseline tests are valid for 1 full calendar year. Athletes must present proof of completion of a baseline test that will remain valid throughout the upcoming season in order to be accepted. If your baseline test is set to expire during the sporting season, you may be required to take a retest to ensure validity throughout the season.
 - b. To find the clinic, please visit <https://shieldathletics.ca/concussion-management/>. Please contact the clinic and indicate that you would like to register your team or athlete for baseline testing.
2. Trainers U14 and above must download the accompanying *HeadCheck* Smartphone Application and attend the HeadCheck online information session.
3. If a concussion is suspected, whether occurring as a part of **Burlington City Rep Hockey Club** or otherwise, the athlete is to be removed immediately from all practices and/or games and not permitted to return until cleared by a Shield Sports Medicine practitioner or through the *HeadCheck* Smartphone Application.
 - a. All suspected concussions must be reported through the HeadCheck Smartphone Application by a trainer.
 - b. All suspected concussions should be encouraged to see their primary

care physician or make an appointment at Shield Athletics and Sports Medicine as soon as possible to receive a proper diagnosis and begin the *Return to-Play* process. If any red flags are suspected, the athlete should immediately visit the nearest emergency department.

4. Burlington City Rep Hockey Club Return-to-Play Process:

Each stage must be separated by at least 24 hours, and the athlete must be completely symptom-free at each stage prior to progressing to the next stage. If symptoms are experienced at any stage, the athlete is to drop back to the previous stage for a period of 24 hours and be symptom-free at that stage prior to attempting the next stage again. Any stage below marked with ** indicates that this stage must be completed under the supervision of a Shield practitioner.

Stage 1 – Symptom-limited rest **

Once the athlete has received a diagnosis of concussion from a Shield Sports Medicine practitioner, the first step is symptom-limited cognitive and physical rest. At this stage, it is important that the athlete not engage in any physical or cognitive activity that may provoke symptoms or increase the risk of a secondary injury.

Stage 2 – Light ‘Cognitive’ Activity

“Cognitive” means mental. At this stage, the athlete should begin incorporating short periods of light reading, homework, TV viewing, etc. If the athlete can tolerate 1 hour of light cognitive activity without increasing symptoms, progress to stage 3 the following day.

Stage 3 – Half-Day of School with Modifications

The athlete is now permitted to attend a half-day of school with modifications. Typical modifications include but are not limited to: No tests, No gym, No homework, No music class, Frequent breaks etc. If the athlete can complete a half-day of school without increasing symptoms, progress to stage 4 the following day.

Stage 4 – Full Day of School with Modifications

The athlete is now permitted to attend a full day of school. If the athlete can complete a full day of school without increasing symptoms, progress to stage 5 the following day.

Stage 5 – Light Physical Activity **

This stage incorporates the addition of light physical exertion to see how your brain responds to an increased demand for blood flow. You will need to book an appointment with a Shield practitioner to complete this stage. Dress in athletic attire and be required to complete 20-30 minutes of clinician supervised physical activity while your heart rate and blood flow are monitored.

Stage 6 – Non-Contact Practice – Phase I (Low Intensity)

The athlete is now permitted to return to sport specific activity with the team in a NON-CONTACT format and administered by a coach/trainer. The athlete will be asked to complete various simple “sport-specific” drills that do not involve contact or the chance of contact. These drills will be individually based and will involve fairly low physical stress.

Stage 7 – Non-Contact Practice – Phase II (Higher Intensity)

This stage will once again be administered by your coach and/or trainer. The athlete is now permitted to take place in ‘dryland’ training and weight training. Sport-specific drills can now be conducted at higher intensity and be more *team-based* (3-man weave, breakouts, etc.). At this stage, athletes are still NOT permitted to participate in any drills that involve contact or that have the chance for potential contact.

Stage 8 – Blackhawks Protocol and Re-Testing of Baseline **

This stage will require you book an appointment with a Shield practitioner. The Blackhawks protocol is an intensive physical exertion protocol that challenges the athlete’s cardiovascular system as well as their balance (vestibular system) and assesses their readiness to return to full athletic competition. Upon successful completion of the Blackhawks program, the athlete will immediately undergo full re-testing of all baseline parameters to assess every area of neurological function to determine if the athlete has reached full brain recovery.

Stage 9 – Full Practice

Upon successful completion of stage 8, it is strongly encouraged that you participate in at least 1 practice at full intensity, including contact drills, prior to participating in a game.

Stage 10 – Full Game-Play