



Dear parents/caregivers/players and spectators,

I would like to bring to your attention the RSMU Football Club Concussion and Head Injury Policy. This policy is written in strict conjunction with AFL Concussion Guidelines, and is a mandatory policy that all clubs must follow.

What is concussion?

Concussion is caused by trauma to the brain, which can be either direct or indirect (e.g. whiplash injury). When the forces are high enough, they can "stun" nerves and affect the way in which the brain functions. This results in a range of symptoms and signs depending on the area of the brain that is affected. Common symptoms of concussion include headache, blurred vision, dizziness, nausea, balance problems, fatigue and feeling "not quite right". Other common features of concussion include confusion, memory loss and reduced ability to think clearly and process information. Loss of consciousness is seen in only 10-20% of cases of concussion in Australian football. That is, the footballer does not have to lose consciousness to have a concussion.

RSMU Football Club Procedure

Any player who has suffered a concussion **or is suspected** of having a concussion will be medically assessed as soon as possible after the injury and **will not be allowed to return to play** in the same game or train in the same practice session.

A concussed player must not be allowed to return to school or return to training or playing before having a formal medical clearance. **A doctor's letter is mandatory and will be kept on file.**

For children (players aged 5-17)

The child is not to return to play or sport until they have successfully returned to school/learning, without worsening of symptoms. It is reasonable for a child to miss a day or two of school after concussion. Children also must provide a doctor's letter before the child will be able to return to training or competition.

As a general rule, for a mild head injury the player must provide medical clearance and pass at least two training sessions before returning to competition. A more serious concussion will require the player to provide medical clearance, pass at least four training sessions and miss at least one game and before returning to competition.

Please understand that no two concussions or head injuries are the same. As trainers, it is our role and duty of care to look after the wellbeing of every player. Head injuries and concussion is a serious issue, and if not treated correctly, can have devastating effects, some of which aren't noticed until later in life. In all cases we are following the rule "if in doubt, sit out".

As qualified and experienced trainers we ask that you respect our role and decisions. Once a decision has been made about a player, there is no questioning the trainer or undermining them. Actions outside of the football club are out of our control, but when under our due care our decision is final.

Please come and speak to any of our trainers if you would like further clarification about any of the above information. More information can be found at www.aflcommunityclub.com.au

Kind regards,

RSMU Football Club