



## ROWING BRITISH COLUMBIA

### CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Policy Title	Concussion Management Policy
Effective Date	June 27, 2024
Date Last Reviewed	N/A
Scheduled Review Date	2027
Replaces and/or Amends	Rowing BC Concussion Policy (2022)
Approved By and Date	Rowing BC Board of Directors, June 26, 2024
Appendices to the Policy	Appendix A – Concussion Awareness and Education Guidelines; Appendix B – Concussion Recognition Tool 5; Appendix C – Return to Rowing Protocol

#### Purpose

The health and wellbeing of all individuals involved in the sport of rowing is always at the forefront of Rowing British Columbia's ("Rowing BC") efforts. This Concussion Management Policy and associated procedures have been developed in accordance with Rowing Canada Aviron's [Concussion Management Policy and Procedures](#), which provides that it is the responsibility of the members of Rowing Canada Aviron, including provincial bodies such as Rowing BC, to develop their own regulations and procedures for concussion management. The policy aims to provide guidelines on concussion procedures to ensure that any athlete involved in a Rowing BC official team activity, Rowing BC program, or Rowing BC hosted event who sustains a suspected concussion receives timely and appropriate care with proper management to allow them to return to rowing safely.

## **Scope and Application**

This Policy applies to all participants involved in Rowing BC activities, programs, and events, including but not limited to athletes, coaches, officials, umpires, team managers, team staff, regatta organizers, administrators, volunteers, staff, and contractors of Rowing BC (“**Participants**”).

It is incumbent on Rowing BC member organizations to establish their own policies and procedures for concussion management which will apply to those activities, programs and events under the control of the respective organizations.

## **Policy Statement**

Rowing BC is committed to the wellbeing and safety of all athletes engaged in the sport of rowing. We recognize the potential severity of a head injury and the commitment and intent behind research to manage concussions. Rowing BC’s Concussion Policy aims to:

1. increase awareness around the prevention and management of concussions in sport;
2. provide guidance in the recognition, removal, reporting, and/or return to sport of athletes who suffer a suspected and/or diagnosed concussion.

A concussion is a clinical diagnosis that can only be made by a physician or nurse practitioner. Rowing BC accepts no liability in the application or interpretation of this Policy.

## Procedures

### 1.1. Recognizing Concussions

The Concussion Recognition Tool, set out in Appendix A, lists the red flags, visible clues, and symptoms of suspected concussion and memory questions that can help identify a suspected concussion. Participants should refer to this Tool if an athlete suffers an impact to the head or body or seems different than usual.

In participation in Rowing BC activities, programs, and events, Participants (and parents/guardians of Participants under the age of 18) should communicate openly and honestly about situations where an athlete suffers a significant impact to their head, face, neck, body, or boat.

The Concussion Recognition Tool is intended to assist in identifying a suspected concussion. It is not intended to be used in the diagnosis of a concussion.

### 1.2. Removal from Sport

For the purposes of this Policy:

- (a) a **“Person in Authority”** means any Participant who holds a position of authority within Rowing BC including, but not limited to, staff, coaches, instructors, umpires, officials, managers, support personnel, and chaperones.
- (b) **“Removal from sport”** means the removal from participation in Rowing BC activities, programs, or events, and includes on-water rowing and dryland activities.

In the event of a suspected concussion where there are red flags, visual clues of a concussion, symptoms of a concussion, or a failure to correctly answer memory questions, a Person in Authority must immediately remove the athlete from sport. The Person in Authority will err on the side of caution in their decision making. Athletes will comply with the decision of a Person in Authority to remove the athlete from sport under this Policy.

The Concussion Recognition Tool sets out concussion management steps that should be taken once an athlete is removed from sport.

All athletes of any age with a suspected concussion should seek medical assistance from a licensed healthcare professional and must not return to sport until receiving medical clearance.

More information on signs and symptoms of a concussion as well as appropriate response needed can be found in the concussion resources set out in Appendix B.

### 1.3. Reporting

In the event that an athlete is removed from sport as a result of a suspected concussion, the athlete's coach or instructor will complete the incident report form at Appendix C and submit the completed form to Rowing BC's Executive Director at [exdirector@rowingbc.ca](mailto:exdirector@rowingbc.ca). The athlete's coach or instructor will notify Rowing BC once the athlete receives medical clearance to return to sport.

Rowing BC's Privacy Policy applies to any personal information that Rowing BC collects or processes under the Concussion Management Policy.

### 1.4. Returning to Sport

The following procedures describe the return to sport protocol applicable to all athletes who have been removed from sport due to a suspected concussion. These procedures are subject to the discretion of a licensed healthcare professional, preferably with experience in managing concussions.

For the purpose of this Policy, "**return to sport**" means the return to participation in Rowing BC activities, programs, or events, and includes on-water rowing and dryland activities.

#### 1.4.1. Where Licensed Healthcare Professional Confirms No Diagnosed Concussion

An athlete who has been removed from sport due to a suspected concussion and has been assessed by a licensed healthcare professional who confirms in writing that the athlete has not been diagnosed with concussion may only return to sport after providing their coach or instructor with such written confirmation. I.

#### 1.4.2. Where Licensed Healthcare Professional Confirms Diagnosed Concussion

Coaches and instructors must ensure that the return to sport of athletes who are diagnosed with a concussion is managed in accordance with the Return to Rowing Strategy, set out in Appendix D, under the supervision of a licensed healthcare professional. The Return to Rowing Strategy is subject to the discretion of a licensed healthcare professional.

An athlete returning to sport under the Return to Rowing Strategy must provide their coach or instructor with written clearance from a licensed healthcare professional:

- (a) before beginning Stage 1 activities; and
- (b) before beginning Stage 5 activities.

Once cleared, coaches and instructors will gradually build the activity level to help progress the individual slowly. This will include attempting to ensure the first time on the water is in mild weather conditions and starting with crew boats or boats with stabilizing pontoons. Competition (Stage 6) will only be permitted once the athlete has demonstrated symptom-free completion of a minimum of two on-water training experiences involving a mix of conditions.

Where an athlete who has been cleared to return to sport exhibits red flags, visual clues of a concussion, or symptoms of a concussion, a Person in Authority must remove the athlete from sport and refer them to a licensed healthcare professional for reassessment and clearance before the athlete returns to sport.

## **Appendix A – Concussion Awareness and Education Guides**

### Concussion Guide for Athletes

English <https://parachute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Concussion-Guide-for-Athletes.pdf>

### French

<https://parachute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Guide-sur-les-commotions-cérébrales-pour-les-athlètes-UA.pdf>

### Concussion Guide for Parents and Caregivers

### English

<https://parachute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Concussion-Guide-for-Parents-and-Caregivers.pdf>

French <https://parachute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Commotion-Parents-UA.pdf>

### Concussion Guide for Coaches, Trainers and Officials

### English

<https://parachute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Concussion-Guide-for-Coaches-and-Trainers.pdf>

French <https://parachute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Commotion-Entraîneurs-UA.pdf>

## Appendix B – Concussion Recognition Tool 5

[The Concussion Recognition Tool 6 \(CRT6\) \(bmj.com\)](http://www.bmj.com)

# CRT6™



## Concussion Recognition Tool

To Help Identify Concussion in Children, Adolescents and Adults

### What is the Concussion Recognition Tool?

A concussion is a brain injury. The Concussion Recognition Tool 6 (CRT6) is to be used by non-medically trained individuals for the identification and immediate management of suspected concussion. It is not designed to diagnose concussion.

### Recognise and Remove

#### Red Flags: CALL AN AMBULANCE

If **ANY** of the following signs are observed or complaints are reported after an impact to the head or body the athlete should be immediately removed from play/game/activity and transported for urgent medical care by a healthcare professional (HCP):

- Neck pain or tenderness
- Seizure, 'fits', or convulsion
- Loss of vision or double vision
- Loss of consciousness
- Increased confusion or deteriorating conscious state (becoming less responsive, drowsy)
- Weakness or numbness/tingling in more than one arm or leg
- Repeated Vomiting
- Severe or increasing headache
- Increasingly restless, agitated or combative
- Visible deformity of the skull

### Remember

- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid should be followed: assess danger at the scene, check airway, breathing, circulation; look for reduced awareness of surroundings or slowness or difficulty answering questions.
- Do not attempt to move the athlete (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so.
- Do not remove helmet (if present) or other equipment.
- Assume a possible spinal cord injury in all cases of head injury.
- Athletes with known physical or developmental disabilities should have a lower threshold for removal from play.

This tool may be freely copied in its current form for distribution to individuals, teams, groups, and organizations. Any alteration (including translations and digital re-formatting), re-branding, or sale for commercial gain is not permissible without the expressed written consent of BMJ.

#### If there are no Red Flags, identification of possible concussion should proceed as follows:

Concussion should be suspected after an impact to the head or body when the athlete seems different than usual. Such changes include the presence of **any one or more** of the following: visible clues of concussion, signs and symptoms (such as headache or unsteadiness), impaired brain function (e.g. confusion), or unusual behaviour.

**CRT6****Concussion Recognition Tool**

To Help Identify Concussion in Children, Adolescents and Adults

**1: Visible Clues of Suspected Concussion**

Visible clues that suggest concussion include:

- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Falling unprotected to the playing surface
- Disorientation or confusion, staring or limited responsiveness, or an inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Dazed, blank, or vacant look
- Seizure, fits, or convulsions
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Unsteady on feet / balance problems or falling over / poor coordination / wobbly
- Facial injury

**2: Symptoms of Suspected Concussion**

Physical Symptoms	Changes in Emotions
Headache	More emotional
"Pressure in head"	More Irritable
Balance problems	Sadness
Nausea or vomiting	Nervous or anxious
Drowsiness	
Dizziness	Changes in Thinking
Blurred vision	Difficulty concentrating
More sensitive to light	Difficulty remembering
More sensitive to noise	Feeling slowed down
Fatigue or low energy	Feeling like "in a fog"
"Don't feel right"	
Neck Pain	<b>Remember</b> , symptoms may develop over minutes or hours following a head injury.

**3: Awareness**

(Modify each question appropriately for each sport and age of athlete)

Failure to answer any of these questions correctly may suggest a concussion:

- "Where are we today?"
- "What event were you doing?"
- "Who scored last in this game?"
- "What team did you play last week/game?"
- "Did your team win the last game?"

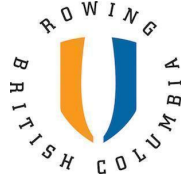
**Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be - IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PRACTICE OR PLAY and should NOT RETURN TO ANY ACTIVITY WITH RISK OF HEAD CONTACT, FALL OR COLLISION, including SPORT ACTIVITY until ASSESSED MEDICALLY, even if the symptoms resolve.**

Athletes with suspected concussion should **NOT**:

- Be left alone initially (at least for the first 3 hours). Worsening of symptoms should lead to immediate medical attention.
- Be sent home by themselves. They need to be with a responsible adult.
- Drink alcohol, use recreational drugs or drugs not prescribed by their HCP
- Drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a healthcare professional



## Appendix C - Concussion Incident Report Form



### SUSPECTED CONCUSSION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

<b>Athlete's last name:</b>	<b>Athlete's first name:</b>
<b>Location of incident:</b>	
<b>Date of incident:</b>	
<b>Time of first intervention:</b>	
<b>Time of medical support:</b>	
<b>Describe the incident:</b>	
<b>Actions taken:</b>	

Form completed by \_\_\_\_\_ (Name & Signature) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

*Rowing BC collects the information in this form for the sole purposes of ensuring the safety of athletes participating in Rowing BC activities, programs and events, monitoring the effectiveness of Rowing BC's concussion policy and procedures, and informing Rowing BC's ongoing and future concussion management and prevention initiatives.*

*By participating in Rowing BC activities, programs, and events, participants consent to the collection of their personal information through this Suspected Concussion Incident Report Form and otherwise under the Concussion Management Policy for the purposes set out above. Rowing BC's Privacy Policy applies to the personal information collected in this form.*

## Appendix D - Return to Rowing Strategy

Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, following a concussion is a stage-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution. The following strategy provides guidance to coaches, instructors, and others in supporting an athlete in their return to sport. It is intended to focus on individualized progression with the individual's long-term health as the priority. This strategy is subject to the discretion of a licensed healthcare professional.

Each stage must take a **minimum of one day** but could last longer, depending on the athlete and their specific situation. Starting the return to rowing and progression between stages may only occur if the athlete remains symptom-free.

If symptoms reappear at any stage, go back to the previous stage until symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

### Proceed to Stage 1 only after medical clearance in writing

#### **STAGE 1: Symptom limited activity – Goal: A gradual reintroduction of activity**

After an initial short period of rest of 24-48 hours, light cognitive and physical activity (such as daily activities and light chores) can be initiated as long as they don't worsen symptoms.

#### **STAGE 2: Light aerobic exercise – Goal: Increased heart rate**

Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. The athlete should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weightlifting. 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.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** Proceed to Stage 3 after 24 hours.

#### **STAGE 3: More Diverse Cardio – Goal: Add movement**

Activities such as light running or gentle body weight resistance exercises can begin at stage 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high-speed stops or hitting a baseball with a bat.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** Proceed to Stage 4 after 24 hours.

#### **STAGE 4: Building Cardio with Increased Cognitive Challenges - Goal: Exercise, coordination, and increased thinking**

Activities such as indoor rowing and resistance training can be added to activities from previous stages.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** The time needed to progress will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the athlete.

**Proceed to Stage 5 only after medical clearance in writing**

**STAGE 5: On water practice, once cleared – Goal: Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff**

Coaches will allow return to the water in gradually challenging conditions. Start on water activities in a crew boat or a boat with stabilizing pontoons.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** Proceed to Stage 6 after a minimum of two on water situations without symptoms.

**STAGE 6: Competition**

Return to sport with normal activities

*\*\* Core of document from Parachute Canada ([parachutecanada.org/concussion](http://parachutecanada.org/concussion)) Revised Nov 11, 2019, with rowing-specific additions made by Rowing Canada Aviron and Rowing BC.*