



It is Special Olympics' intent to take steps to help ensure the health and safety of all Special Olympics participants. All Special Olympics participants should remember that safety comes first and should take reasonable steps to help minimize the risks for concussion and other serious brain injuries.

"When in doubt, sit them out."

What is a Concussion?

All concussions are serious. A concussion is a brain injury that:





- Is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body
- Can change the way a brain normally works
- Can happen to anyone at anytime, not only during sport activities
- Can occur even if there was no loss of consciousness
- Can be serious, even from the slightest ding or "getting their bell rung"

Most individuals with a concussion get better, but it is very important to allow time for the brain to heal.

Signs/Symptoms of a Concussion

Concussions cannot be seen; however in a potentially concussed person one or more of the symptoms listed below may become apparent and/or the person "doesn't feel right" soon after, a few days after or even weeks after the injury. Those who have had a concussion in the past are also at risk of having another one and may find that it takes longer to recover if they have another concussion.

Symptoms of concussion usually fall into four categories:

 Thinking/ Remembering	 Physical	 Emotional/ Mood	 Sleep
Difficulty thinking clearly	Headache Fuzzy or blurry vision	Irritability	Sleeping more than usual
Feeling slowed down	Nausea or vomiting (early on) Dizziness	Sadness	Sleep less than usual
Difficulty concentrating	Sensitivity to noise or light Balance problems	More emotional	Trouble falling asleep
Difficulty remembering new information	Feeling tired, having no energy	Nervousness or anxiety	

A Coaches role in identifying Concussion symptoms: The rule of thumb, “When in doubt, sit them out.”

Effective January 1, 2015, a participant who is suspected of sustaining a concussion in a practice, game or competition shall be removed from practice, play or competition at that time. If a qualified medical professional is available on-site to render an evaluation, that person shall have final authority as to the removal or return to play of the participant. If applicable, the participant’s parent or guardian should be made aware that the participant is suspected of sustaining a concussion.

Return to Play

A participant who has been removed from practice, play or competition due to a suspected concussion may not participate in Special Olympics sports activities until either of the following occurs:

1. At least seven (7) consecutive days have passed since the participant was removed from play and a currently licensed, qualified medical professional provides written clearance for the participant to return to practice, play and competition
2. A currently licensed, qualified medical professional determines that the participant did not suffer a concussion and provides written clearance for the participant to return to practice play immediately.

Written clearance in either of the scenarios above shall become a **permanent record**.

Required Training and Timeline

WHO?

- All coaches (anyone stepping on the field with SO athletes, not only certified) are required to complete concussion awareness training.
- All current coaches **MUST** complete the training by **December 31, 2015**
- As of January 1, 2015 all new coaches will be required to take this course as a part of their training (along with General Orientation, Protective Behaviors, CRC)
- Similar to Protective Behaviors the training must be completed every 3 years.

WHERE?

- There are two trainings that have been approved by SOI: **BOTH are FREE**
 - <http://nfhslearn.com/courses/38000>
 - SOPA recommended
 - http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html
- Each program will provide you with a Certificate of Completion
 - Please type your name and county into the certificate (ex. John Smith, ABC County)
 - Save the certificate to your computer as: CCT_Your County_Your Last Name_Your First Name (ie. Jennifer would name her file: CCT_Centre_Tresp_Jennifer). You can also print a copy for your records.
 - Email a copy to sportstraining@specialolympicspa.org, subject line “Concussion Training”.

WHEN? (Frequency of Training)

- Concussion awareness training must be completed by all Coaches at least once every three years.

IS THERE A BENEFIT?

- Besides being a good source of knowledge and ensuring the safety of your athletes.
- This can also be used as Continuing Education for ALL of your current Sport Certifications.
 - In order to count this as Continuing Education you must follow the above steps and in addition complete an STA (Sports Training Application) and send it to Jennifer Tresp at jtresp@specialolympicspa.org
 - To declare this training as a continuing education you must complete a Sports Training Application (STA) (Sections 1, 2, and 4) and submit the STA with your certificate.
- Concussion training may be used for continuing education credits just like protective behaviors, once every nine years.