

CONCUSSIONS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

"Some people call it the toughest return-to-play law. Others call it the most enlightened return-to-play law."

- RICHARD H. ADLER

The Truth

All concussions are brain injuries, all brain injuries are serious!¹ They don't just happen to boys playing football; women's soccer actually has a higher rate of concussions than football, most resulting from head to head and head to elbow contact.² Concussions can even result from a jarring force to the body, jostling the brain.⁴ Many times this incident goes unmentioned, because an athlete may believe that they have to get knocked out to have a concussion, this is absolutely not true!³ If the athlete thinks they can just walk it off or sit down for a while and go back and play, they are putting

themselves at great risk of significant injury.⁵



Concussion Myths

1. They aren't important
2. They only occur to boy/football players
3. Loss of Consciousness = Concussion
4. Athlete must be hit in the head
5. You should keep playing... "what's the worst that can happen"

Background

According to the CDC, 3.8 million sport/recreation-related head injuries occur every year, most can be classified as concussion. In October 2006, Zackery Lystedt suffered a severe brain injury because no one recognized the signs and symptoms associated with a sports concussion, Lystedt continued to play and later collapsed with a life threatening injury.

Early identification of an athlete with a concussion is critical, as athletes who return to play too soon following initial injury are at risk for significant brain injuries, some of which can be catastrophic as

happened to Zackery Lystedt. In May 2009, Washington State passed the Zackery Lystedt Law, the nation's toughest return-to-play law. It requires medical clearance of youth athletes under the age of 18 suspected of sustaining a concussion before they can be sent back into a game, practice, or training.

What You Need To Know

This law was passed to protect the athlete, and a large portion of the law is devoted to education. A stern emphasis placed on educating coaches, athletes and their parents to **RECOGNIZE** the signs and symptoms of concussion, **REMOVE** the athlete from participation, and **REFER** them to a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion.

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