

# **AGAWAM YOUTH FOOTBALL**

## **CONCUSSION - GRADUATED RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

- A note by a health care professional is needed in order to begin the graduated return to play protocol.

Below are the five gradual steps you and your health care professional should follow to help safely return the athlete to play. Remember, this is a gradual process. These steps will not be completed in one day, but instead over days, weeks or months.

### **Baseline:**

Athletes should not have any concussion symptoms. Athletes should only progress to the next level of exertion if they do not have any symptoms at the current step.

### **Step 1:**

Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase the athlete's heart rate. This means about 5 to 10 minutes on an exercise bike, walking or light jogging. No weight lifting at this point.

### **Step 2:**

Continue with activities to increase an athlete's heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary bike, moderate-intensity weight lifting (reduced time and/or reduced weight from your typical routine).

### **Step 3:**

Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting, non-contact sport-specific drills (in 3 planes of movement)

### **Step 4:**

Athlete may return to practice and full contact in controlled practice.

### **Step 5:**

Athlete may return to competition.

If an athlete's symptoms come back or she/he gets new symptoms when becoming more active at any step, this is a sign that the athlete is pushing him/herself too hard. The athlete will stop these activities and the athlete's health care provider will be contacted. After more rest and no concussion symptoms, the athlete will begin at the previous step.