

To: NYSPHSAA Member Schools  
Sport Official Organizations  
From: New York State Public High School Athletic Association  
Date: August 3, 2010  
Re: NFHS Concussion Rule

**Revised 8/19/10**

This memo is to serve as a clarification of the NFHS Concussion Rule, effective for the 2010-2011 school year, for the sports that use the NFHS rules.

The NFHS Concussion Rule states, *“Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headaches, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional”*. The NFHS emphasizes in the concussion rule that coaches and officials are NOT expected to “diagnose” a concussion. This is the responsibility of the appropriate health-care professional.

The responsibility for observing signs, symptoms, and behaviors that are consistent with a concussion is shared by both sport officials and school officials. The following protocol should be followed if any signs, symptoms or behaviors are observed.

**Sport official:** Remove the athlete from the contest. The official is NOT responsible for the sideline evaluation or the management of the athlete once they have been removed from the game. The official does not have to receive any paper work clearing the player to return to the game.

**School official:** The athlete needs to be *assessed by an appropriate health care professional. School health personnel are considered appropriate health care professionals. School health personnel include the Chief School Medical Officer, school nurse, physician, certified athletic trainer or an EMT that is a member of the on-site EMS squad. If the appropriate health care professional suspects a concussion, the student athlete MAY NOT return to the contest. The athlete MAY NOT return if an appropriate health care professional is not available. The NFHS and NYSPHSAA recommend that any athlete that suffers a concussion should not return to play the day of the injury. A student athlete that has been diagnosed with a concussion MUST be cleared by the Chief School Medical Officer.*

The NFHS and NYSPHSAA have developed many resources to help school officials, sport officials, parents, and students learn more about concussion management. A concussion DVD, sideline cards, and other useful materials can be found on the NYSPHSAA website ([www.nysphsaa.org](http://www.nysphsaa.org)). A cost free concussion management course can be found on the NFHS website ([www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)).

We have included a list of possible signs, symptoms, and behaviors that can be observed by sport officials and school officials. We have also included for school officials a recommended return to play protocol. We encourage anyone that has questions or concerns to contact the NYSPHSAA office or the Section Concussion Management Team.