DANGERS OF CONCUSSION

Concussions at all levels of sports have received a great deal of attention and a state law has been passed to address this issue. Adolescent athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussion. Once considered little more than a minor “ding” to the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in death, or changes in brain function (either short-term or long-term). A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. Continued participation in any sport following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as well as increased risk for further injury to the brain, and even death.

Player and parental education in this area is crucial – that is the reason for this document. Refer to it regularly. This form must be signed by a parent or guardian of each student who wishes to participate in GHSA athletics. One copy needs to be returned to the school, and one retained at home.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

- Headache, dizziness, poor balance, moves clumsily, reduced energy level/tiredness
- Pressure in the head, neck pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Blurred vision, sensitivity to light and sounds
- Fogginess of memory: difficulty concentrating, slowed thought processes, confused about surroundings or game assignments, difficulty remembering
- Seizure
- Unexplained changes in behavior and personality: irritability, sadness
- Loss of consciousness (NOTE: This does not occur in all concussion episodes.)

BY-LAW 2.68: GHSA CONCUSSION POLICY: In accordance with Georgia law and national playing rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest and shall not return to play until an appropriate health care professional has determined that no concussion has occurred. (NOTE: An appropriate health care professional may include, licensed physician (MD/DO) or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and management.

A) No athlete is allowed to return to a game or a practice on the same day that a concussion (a) has been diagnosed, OR (b) cannot be ruled out.

B) Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion shall be cleared medically by an appropriate health care professional prior to resuming participation in any future practice or contest. The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol shall be a part of the medical clearance.
C) It is mandatory that every coach in each GHSA sport participate in a free, online course on concussion management prepared by the NFHS and available at www.nfhslearn.com at least every two years – beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

D) Each school will be responsible for monitoring the participation of its coaches in the concussion management course, and shall keep a record of those who participate.

This protocol (GHSA) adheres conjointly with the Toombs County Board of Education’s guidelines/protocol as well as Optim Healthcare’s guidelines/protocol.

Concussion Educational Sheet

How to prevent a concussion?
Do not initiate contact with your head or helmet. You can still get a concussion if you are wearing a helmet. (HEAD UP AT ALL TIMES DURING CONTACT!).

Avoid striking an opponent in the head. Undercutting, flying elbows, stepping on a head, and checking an unprotected opponent all cause concussions.

Follow your athletics department’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.

Practice good sportsmanship

What to do if you think you have a concussion?
Don’t Hide It, Report It, Get Checked Out, Take Time to Rest

How to feel better after a concussion?
Any athlete with a concussion should be instructed to rest. Athlete should reuse normal activities of daily living as tolerated while avoiding activities that potentially increase symptoms (scholastic work, reading, video games, texting, computer time, TV, IPod/IPad, driving, and physical education or weight training, and household chores) until symptoms begin to decrease in severity.

An athlete with a concussion should avoid any medication with the exception of acetaminophen unless prescribed by treating physician. Athletes should be instructed to avoid ingesting alcohol, illicit drugs, or other substances that might interfere with cognitive function and neurologic recovery.

__________________________________________
I HAVE READ THIS CONCUSSION AWARENESS FORM AND I UNDERSTAND THE FACTS PRESENTED IN IT.

SIGNED: (Parent or Guardian): __________________________________________

(S Student): __________________________________________

DATE: _________________________
Student-Athlete Concussion Statement

STUDENTS: PLEASE WRITE YOUR INITIALS IN THE BLANK SPACE BY EACH STATEMENT.

________ I understand that it is my responsibility to report all injuries and illnesses to my athletic trainer and/or team physician.

________ I have read and understand the Concussion Fact Sheet.

After reading the Concussion fact sheet, I am aware of the following information:

________ A concussion is a brain injury, which I am responsible for reporting to my team physician or athletic trainer.

________ A concussion can affect my ability to perform everyday activities, and affect reaction time, balance, sleep, and classroom performance.

________ You cannot see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury.

________ If I suspect a teammate has a concussion, I am responsible for reporting the injury to my team physician or athletic trainer.

________ I will not return to play in a game or practice if I have received a blow to the head or body that results in concussion-related symptoms.

________ Following concussion the brain needs time to heal. You are much more likely to have a repeat concussion if you return to play before your symptoms resolve.

________ In rare cases, repeat concussions can cause permanent brain damage, and even death.

_________________________     ___________
Signature of Student-Athlete       Date