

Head Injuries – Concussions SSL 2019

Concussion is a traumatic brain injury

Swimming is not a contact sport, but any head contact could cause a concussion. If head contact occurs, first priority is condition and safety of the swimmer.

Examples:

- Pushing off the wall during circle swims and head to head contact
- Diving during warm-ups into a crowded lane and head to head contact
- Backstroke finishes when swimmer miscounts their strokes
- Butterfly finishes with head, not hands
- Kids fooling around in the pool where they can have head to head contact – raft night.
- Young swimmers knocked over when throwing the coach into the pool at end of meet

Signs

- Dazed or stunned appearance
- Confusion about assignment or position
- Forgetfulness
- Uncertainty of game, score, or opponent
- Clumsy movements
- Slow response to questions
- Mood, behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to or after hit or fall

Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness

Symptoms

- Headache or “pressure” on the head
- Nausea
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy or foggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion

Referee and Coaches responsibilities:

- Get the life guard on duty to assist if needed.
- Evaluate the swimmer to determine if a possible concussion
- If possible neck or back injuries, have the life guards remove the swimmer with a back board.
- Actions – remove the swimmer from pool and competition right away.

- “If in doubt, sit them out”
- No activity for a day until evaluated by medical professional
- Must be evaluated by a qualified health care professional experienced in concussions.
- Tell the coach and parent right away
- If the swimmer exhibited any signs of a concussion, or you as the Referee are not sure, and the coach or parent argues the swimmer is okay, they just “rang their bell” and need to swim, the Referee has the responsibility to not allow the child to swim.
- Coaches, Ask for written instructions for return to practice

Swimmer Safety is Number One Priority.

Words of wisdom from an experienced (old) official, “There is swimming, and then there are the important things in life.”