



## **Concussion Management Policy**

Volleyball ACT

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Controlling Body

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VACT Board

## **Overview**

Volleyball ACT (VACT) Concussion Management Policy (Policy) has been introduced to reduce the risk of concussion brain injury to players involved in VACT events or activities. The policy also contains guidance to assist players, coaches, and officials in managing concussion.

This Policy is not intended to be a medical document.

## **Background**

Concussion is a brain injury and is defined as a complex physiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces. Concussion may be caused by either a direct or indirect blow to the head, face, neck or body causing an impulsive force transmitted to the head (from Sport Australia, <https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/>). All concussions are serious and can lead to death, however in most cases the effects of concussion are temporary and players will recover fully when managed correctly. The effects of concussion on children are different to adults and therefore will require a different management approach

VACT takes the risk of concussion in the sport very seriously. Players, parents, coaches and officials need to act in the best interest of player safety and VACT aims to ensure that all of its members are aware of how to recognise and safely manage concussion. This Policy adheres to the following principles:

- Recognise and Remove;
- Refer;
- Rest;
- Recover; and
- Return.

## **Policy Application**

This Policy applies to all VACT members and all other people or organisations which by agreement or otherwise, are bound to comply with this policy (including contractors, board members, employees, administrators, officials, volunteers and attendees at functions of VACT).

This policy applies to behaviour and practices occurring during the course of VACT business, activities, competitions and events.

## **Responsibilities**

VACT's role and contribution in making this policy work is to:

1. Take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that everyone in the organisation knows:
  - What concussion is;
  - How to recognise the signs; and
  - The procedures for managing concussion.
2. This will be achieved by:
  - Distributing the Policy to all Affiliates; and
  - Including a copy of the Policy on the VACT website.

3. Promote training and accreditation courses in concussion management to all members through the VACT communication networks;
4. Promote external concussion management resources to all members through VACT communication networks;
5. Ensure that first aid equipment and trained personnel are available at all Capital Volleyball League and AVL competitions, including AVL and State Team training sessions;
6. Include the 'Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool' in all first aid kits (see *VACT Guideline -Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool*);
7. Maintain and monitor / analyse Incident forms relating to concussion throughout the year to identify any trends;
8. Request that all players assessed to have a concussion by a registered medical doctor must present a return to play clearance prior to playing; and
9. Review this Policy and update as required every 12 months.

VACT and Affiliates member's roles and contribution is to:

- Comply with this policy and ensure information is made available;
- Ensure all significant personnel are familiar with the policy and required procedures at each level of the VACT network;
- Collaborate with VACT staff to implement best practice; and
- Report any areas of concern to VACT in a timely manner.

### **Policy Statement**

VACT will take all breaches of the Policy seriously and will ensure they are dealt with promptly, sensitively and confidentially. Disciplinary action may be taken against a VACT staff member who is found in breach of this Policy, in accordance with the VACT Misconduct Policy.

## **Concussion Management Procedures**

### **Game, Training or Event Day Management**

#### **1. Recognising the injury**

**Visual signs** (any one or more of the following can indicate a possible concussion)

- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Dazed, blank or vacant look (glassy eyed)
- Confused/not aware of plays or events
- Slow to answer / unable to follow instructions
- Lying motionless on ground/slow to get up
- Grabbing or clutching head
- Wounds to the scalp or face
- Mechanism of injury (eg: running into wall)

**Symptoms** (what the player reports)

- Headache
- Nausea / vomiting
- Blurred vision / dizziness
- Balance problems (unsteadiness)
- Memory loss
- Confusion
- Fatigue / drowsiness
- Sensitivity to light and noise
- Feeling 'in a fog' or 'not quite right'

### **Actions**

Upon the referees, coaches or other players identifying any of the above signs or symptoms a First Aid practitioner should be sought immediately.

For all VACT Competitions, the referee **must** stop the point or the match if a potential concussion has occurred, based on observed impact to the player's head. If the player can be safely removed from the court, the point can be replayed / match continued. If the player cannot be safely removed from the court, the delay to play will be managed in accordance with FIVB rules or VACT Competition Regulations on interruption and prolonged interruption.

For all VACT Competitions, the Competition Supervisor (First Aid trained) for that venue **must** be sought, as they have the ultimate decision on whether that player may return to the court. No player who is suspected of a potential concussion may return to the court without clearance from the Competition Supervisor.

#### **2. Removing the player from the game**

- Initial management of the player must adhere to the first aid rules, including airway, breathing, circulation and spinal immobilisation.

- Any player with a suspected concussion must be removed from the game, allowing the player to be properly evaluated.
- If the player is unconscious or unable to move themselves, an ambulance should be called, as they must only be moved by qualified health professionals, who are trained in spinal immobilisation techniques.
- Any player who has suffered a suspected concussion must not be allowed to return to play in the same game.
- It is important not to be influenced by the player, coaching staff, trainers, parents, or any others suggesting that they return to play. **If there is any doubt, sit them out!**
- For all VACT Competitions an accident form must be filled out and returned to VACT Head Office for review by CEO by the next business day.
- For all VACT Competitions a notification will be sent by VACT to the Club Secretary, President and applicable club coach on the next business day informing the club of the requirement for medical clearance for the player to resume training and/or playing.

### 3. Refer the player

- All players with concussion or a suspected concussion need a medical assessment by a registered medical doctor.
- If a doctor is not present at the event the player should be sent to a local general practice or local hospital emergency department.

### 4. Hospital transfer

- Urgent transfer to hospital is required if the player displays any of the following symptoms:
  - Loss of consciousness or seizures
  - Increasing confusion or irritability
  - Deterioration following their injury (eg vomiting, increased headaches or drowsiness)
  - Neck pain or spinal cord symptoms (eg numbness, tingling or weakness)

## **Follow up Management**

### 5. Rest

- Players should rest following a concussion until all symptoms have disappeared, under the management of their medical practitioner. This may take weeks or months depending on the severity
- Players should not ignore their symptoms and in general a more conservative approach should be used in cases where there is any uncertainty.

### 6. Return

- A concussed player must not be allowed to return to physical activity before having a medical clearance / certificate sighted by VACT Competition Management.
- The decision regarding the timing of return should be made by a qualified medical practitioner
- The certificate from that qualified medical professional should define the graduated return to volleyball training and competition.
- If a player shows symptoms again at any stage they should be reviewed again by a qualified medical practitioner.

**Document History Log**

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1	15 Oct 2021	VACT Board