



Head Injury and Concussion Policy

Preamble

The purpose of the London – St. Thomas Croatia Soccer Club (LS Croatia SC) Concussion Policy is to ensure a standardized best practice for LS Croatia SC members to follow in the event a player experiences or is suspected of a concussion. This policy serves to protect players for brain injuries, manage successful and safe returns to the life and sport, and obtain the appropriate medical clearance before returning to play.

LS Croatia SC Philosophy

The London – St. Thomas Croatia Soccer Club is entirely committed to the health and safety of our players. As such, we demand that every precaution be taken before a player who has suffered a suspected or identified head injury be returned to any soccer-related activity.

Background

For reference, a soccer activity is defined as any on or off field team function involving physical activity. Concussions are an inherent risk when participating in sport, and soccer is no exception.

- A concussion may be sustained through a variety of mechanisms. A direct blow to the head, blow to the jaw, sudden twisting or shearing force and a sudden deceleration of the head (similar to a “whiplash”-type injury) can all produce concussive signs and symptoms.
- A concussion is the most common type of traumatic brain injury.
- A concussion is caused when the brain receives trauma from an impact or a sudden momentum or movement change. The blood vessels in the brain may stretch and cranial nerves may be damaged.
- A person may or may not experience a brief loss of consciousness (not exceeding 20 minutes). A person may remain conscious but feel “dazed” or “punch drunk”.
- A concussion may or may NOT show up on a diagnostic imaging test, such as x-rays, CAT Scans, and MRIs.
- Skull fracture, brain bleeding, or swelling may or may not be present. Therefore, concussion is sometimes defined by exclusion and is considered a complex neurobehavioural syndrome.
- A concussion can result in permanent or temporary damage.
- A blood clot in the brain can occur occasionally and be fatal.
- It may take a few months to a few years for a concussion to heal.



LS Croatia SC Policy

1. Any player who suffers a SUSPECTED concussion must stop participation in the soccer activity immediately. If there is doubt as to whether a concussion has occurred, it is to be assumed that it has and that the player's parents/guardian be encouraged to have the injury properly diagnosed at a hospital as soon as possible.

AND

Any player who is diagnosed by a medical doctor with a concussion must stop participation in all soccer activities immediately.

2. Team Officials are responsible to recommend to the individual's parent or guardian that they seek medical attention immediately, especially if the injury incurred in any form of soccer participation. If anyone (coach, parent, or athlete) suspects a concussion has occurred, the coach will remove the player and shall not return him/her for the remainder of the game – regardless of any external pressures from, but not limited to the player's parent/guardian.
3. The player is not permitted to return to any soccer activity until written permission is given by a SPORTS MEDICINE DOCTOR. A sport medicine doctor is more equipped to manage and guide treatment of a concussed athlete as opposed to a general practitioner/family doctor. As such, LS Croatia SC requires written permission from a sport medicine doctor prior to allowing the player to return to any soccer-related activities.
4. Copies of such documentation MUST be submitted to the LS Croatia SC Office prior to the player's return to any soccer activity.