



**Southern Maryland Sabres Hockey Club**  
P.O. Box 6350  
Waldorf, MD 20603

## **Southern Maryland Sabres Concussion Management Policy**

This Policy adopted August 2014 by the Southern Maryland Sabres Hockey Club (“**The Club**”) will implement a standard operating procedure on managing and monitoring concussion injuries among athletes in the Club. The Southern Maryland Sabres will also comply with the USAH Concussion Management Program provisions located in their website and if any conflict between the two the USAH Program will prevail. A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that occurs when a blow or force to the head or body is followed by a change in behavior or performance.

This policy was developed with the following factors/concerns set forth below:

- 1) Proper concussion management is the law. Maryland law, effective July 1, 2014 by the General Assembly of Maryland [(Md. Code Ann. Educ. § 7-433) and § 14-501 of the Maryland Code under the health title in the chapter related to general day care and subtitled youth sports programs. On May 5, 2014, Maryland HB 0427 became law (Chapter 403) amending §14-501], requires the education of coaches, parents, and athletes; removal from play of any athlete suspected of having sustained a concussion; and requires written authorization from a licensed health care provider before the athlete can return to play.
- 2) A reduction of risk for our athletes. The amount of misinformation regarding head injuries and concussions are staggering. Without proper education and policy, the risks associated with concussion increases.
- 3) Increased public awareness of concussions in youth hockey. By developing and implementing a leading edge policy, the Club will gain an image of being on the forefront of this sensitive subject.
- 4) Most importantly, the policy will protect our athletes, parents, coaches, and the reputation of the Southern Maryland Sabres Hockey Club. At the heart of who we are as a hockey club are the people who devote their time and efforts to youth hockey. Concussions in youth hockey can be dangerous and traumatic to those who suffer from them.

The goals of the policy are:

- 1) To develop a policy and protocol that is consistent with the law in the State of Maryland.
- 2) To protect our athletes.
- 3) To educate our coaches.
- 4) To educate our parents about the dangers of concussions and provide identification of resources parents can use to educate themselves and their players on concussion identification, treatment and prevention.

This policy was developed in collaboration with the SCORE program (Safe Concussion Outcome, Recovery and Education) at Children's National. Their recommendations and expertise guided the way in its creation. The concussion policy itself has five parts: Education, Head Impact Protocol, Return to Play, Verification and Enforcement, and Baseline Testing.

### **Part 1 – Education**

- The Southern Maryland Sabres Hockey Club will hold a parent/coaches educational seminar annually on injury recognition and return to play protocol.
- Mandatory for all coaches and managers (or a team representative designated by the team manager) to attend the session offered. Exceptions to attendance are at the discretion of the club President.
- We recommend all teams (either coach, manager or both) download the FREE Concussion Recognition & Response (CRR) phone application for on site evaluation of head impacts and make use of CDC materials (free download from website).
- All coaches must address this policy at a parent meeting each year. Coaches will distribute hand-outs and provide the link to the CDC educational course for all parents.
- Parents will be required to sign acknowledgment of 1) receipt and understanding of CDC educational materials and 2) awareness of the Sabres concussion and return to play policy.

### **Part 2 – Head Impact Protocol**

In the event an athlete sustains a suspected head impact or concerning injury they will be removed from the activity immediately. This includes but is not exclusively limited to games, practices, skill sessions, other on-ice activity, and off-ice activities.

- The player will not be allowed to re-join the activity until after a coach/manager/parent uses the CRR app or CDC symptoms checklist to evaluate the player. When hired EMT is present at games concussion evaluation is to be conducted by EMT. Only if the child does not exhibit any symptoms is the player allowed to return to the activity, with coach's final discretion unless EMT is present. Parent at any time can remove their child from activity for any medical concern with no repercussions.
- Any symptom arising after an impact to the head or body requires that the player to be removed from play or practice immediately and is not allowed to return until cleared by a licensed health care provider, per Maryland State law.
- If emergency medical care is needed the coach/manager should call 911 and have the athlete taken to the ER, along with the parental permission form obtained from each family before the start of the season.

### **Part 3 – Return to Play**

- Once a player has been removed from play due to a concussion, a gradual return to play must be completed when deemed appropriate by the licensed healthcare provider (not the team's coach) prior to participation in any on- or off-ice physical activities. Team meetings and attendance without participation at games and practices with Parent supervision is the exception.
- Parental consent is not accepted for return to play. Parent is to provide doctor's written clearance to a member of the Sabres Board of Directors (BOD). The Sabres member of the BOD will notify the coach of the player's return to activities upon receipt of the doctor's clearance.
- Players who return to Club activity without proper medical authorization will be suspended from the club until such authorization is obtained and must appear before the President for reinstatement. Failure to meet this requirement may include forfeiture of any and all club dues paid and disqualification by the player from future club activities at the discretion of the club Board of Directors.
- The Club recommends that the athlete be referred to the SCORE clinic at Children's National (or other approved Health Professional) for further evaluation.

### **Part 4 – Verification and Enforcement**

- The Club will have one hired EMT per game who will be responsible for paying extra attention and observing for any injuries. If an injury does occur, this medical professional will determine the presence of symptoms and next steps (e.g., return to play if no symptoms; remain out of play if symptoms).
- The Club will appoint a Concussion Coordinator who will maintain a record of attendance by coaches and managers at educational seminars.
- The Concussion Coordinator will gather educational materials to give to the coach to distribute to the parents.
- Any coach or manager/team representative not attending one of the educational seminars, not complying with parent education policy, or not providing appropriate information to the Concussion Coordinator will subject their team to a penalty as determined by the Sabres Board of Directors.

### **Part 5 – Baseline Testing**

- Baseline testing is an exam conducted by trained professionals that are used to help assess a person's brain function (including learning and memory skills, ability to pay attention or concentrate, and how quickly he or she thinks and solves problems). Results from baseline tests can be compared to a similar exam if there is a suspected concussion. The Club does not hold the baseline test results nor is it involved in the administration or the interpretation of baseline test results.
- The Club will strongly recommend to all of its parents that each Club player should be baseline tested by a certified testing agency as an aid to concussion identification and treatment. Opportunity for annual baseline testing at player cost will be provided.
- Other general recommendations include that players under the age of 12 be tested every 12 months and those older every 2 years. The Club understands and acknowledges that many athletes participating in high school sports already take a baseline test and therefore need not take an additional test.