

UIPM CONCUSSION POLICY

2024 EDITION



UNION INTERNATIONALE
DE PENTATHLON MODERNE



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1. Scope

The safety and health of Modern Pentathlon athletes are the main concern of the UIPM Medical Committee, taking into consideration the various competition formats.

Concussions are a serious concern in sport due to the potential short-term and long-term consequences for athlete health and well-being. With this in mind, the UIPM Concussion Policy has been established to outline the procedures for identifying, managing and preventing concussions in all sports governed by UIPM.

2. Concussion Description

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce or twist within the skull, disrupt normal brain function and lead to various symptoms which may be immediate or delayed in onset. Concussion is a common incidence in sport - however, the crucial point is to recognise that the concussion has happened.

Coaches, officials and medical personnel involved in sport events should undergo training to recognise the signs and symptoms of concussion.

3. Symptoms of Concussion

Symptoms of a concussion can vary widely from athlete to athlete and may not be immediately apparent. They can include:

- Headache or a feeling of pressure in the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Confusion or feeling mentally foggy
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Dizziness or feeling lightheaded
- Fatigue
- Changes of mood or behaviour such as irritability or sadness
- Loss of consciousness (not always present).

In some cases, symptoms may worsen over time, particularly if the concussion is not properly managed.

4. Risks of Concussion

Ignoring or downplaying the symptoms of concussion can lead to more serious complications in the short and long term:

- Prolonged or persistent symptoms
- Cognitive difficulties
- Increased risk of future concussions
- Post-concussion syndrome
- Second-impact syndrome, which can be life-threatening
- Chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) in rare cases with multiple concussions.

5. Concussion Removal Policy

Any athlete suspected of having sustained a concussion during training or competition must be immediately removed from competition and/or training. The decision to remove an athlete from competition should be made swiftly and decisively.

Athletes can be removed by:

- UIPM Medical Delegate
- Local Organising Committee (LOC) Chief Medical Officer
- Team Doctor.

The removal of an athlete should be discussed by all parties and, if available, video footage should be consulted. In case of different opinions between the three above-mentioned parties, after discussion the LOC Chief Medical Officer's opinion shall prevail.

An athlete suspected of having sustained a concussion must be guided to a designated medical area and undergo a thorough medical assessment conducted by a qualified medical professional.

The athlete's safety should be the primary concern, and any signs or symptoms of a concussion should be taken seriously. The athlete is not permitted to return to training or competition until they have been evaluated and cleared by a healthcare professional experienced in concussion management.

Available tools

One of the tools that medical professionals should use is SCAT6. If the certified medical professional is not available it is recommended to apply the Concussion Recognition Tool (CRT6) created for use by those who are not-medically trained.

Documentation

The details of the suspected concussion including the circumstances of the injury and the athlete's signs and symptoms should be documented. The information is crucial for ongoing management and medical follow-up.

6.

Concussion Return Policy

An athlete who has been removed from competition due to a suspected concussion should not be allowed to return to competition on the same day regardless of the severity of the concussion.

Following a diagnosed concussion, the athlete must adhere to a structured return-to-play protocol, as prescribed by a qualified healthcare professional.

The return-to-play protocol should include a gradual and monitored progression back to full training and competition, taking into account the athlete's symptoms and recovery progress.

Athletes should not return to full participation until they have completed the full return-to-play protocol and received clearance from a qualified healthcare professional.

Step-by-step process

1. **No activity and complete rest** (min. 24h counted from midnight after competition day); once the athlete is asymptomatic proceed to step 2
2. **Light aerobic exercise** (swimming or walking) – no resistance training. Performing step 2 without symptoms allows the athlete to proceed to level 3; reappearance of symptoms leads back to step 1
3. **Sport-specific training** (Running, fencing, swimming) – progressive addition of resistance training
4. **Medical clearance for participation in competition** – an athlete should provide medical clearance signed by certified medical practitioner that their participation in competition does not represent any risk of harm to their health.

This comprehensive policy aims to educate athletes, coaches and officials about concussions, their symptoms and associated risks, while outlining clear procedures for their identification, removal and safe return to play within UIPM Sports.



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