



# **FERNTREE GULLY EAGLES JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB CONCUSSION POLICY 2025**

## **PURPOSE**

This policy aligns with AFL guidelines to ensure a conservative and responsible approach to concussion management, prioritizing player welfare both in the short and long term.

## **DEFINITION OF CONCUSSION**

Concussion is a brain injury caused by trauma, leading to temporary dysfunction. Symptoms can include impairments in memory, thinking abilities, and overall cognitive function. It is crucial for coaches, training staff, and parents/guardians to recognize the often subtle signs of concussion.

### **Key Considerations:**

- Loss of consciousness is NOT the only symptom of concussion.
- Symptoms can be immediate or delayed.

### **Common Symptoms of Concussion:**

- Difficulty staying awake
- Headaches or migraines
- Memory problems or forgetfulness
- Vomiting
- General feeling of being 'off'
- Dizziness
- Confusion, slurred speech, or unusual behaviour
- Blurred or double vision

### **Observable Signs of Concussion:**

- Loss of balance
- Irritability
- Pale complexion
- Poor concentration
- Slow or altered verbal skills
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Mental confusion and memory loss
- Not feeling "like themselves"

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Ferntree Gully Eagles Junior Football Club acknowledges that concussion is a serious issue in football. Repeated head impacts may contribute to long-term cognitive issues, including depression and dementia. This policy reinforces the club's commitment to player safety.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Implement best-practice concussion management.
- Prioritize player welfare above all else.
- Ensure guidelines are strictly followed.
- Empower trainers to make independent medical decisions without undue pressure from players, coaches, or others.
- Uphold coaches' duty of care in concussion incidents.

## **RISKS**

- Community AFL does not provide immediate medical clearance or definitive concussion diagnosis.
- A conservative management plan is essential for all suspected concussions.

## **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE TO CONCUSSION**

In the early stages, it can be unclear whether an injury is a concussion or a more severe head injury. The immediate response should include:

1. Recognizing a suspected concussion.
2. Removing the player from the game.
3. Referring the player to a medical professional.
4. Ensuring the player obtains medical clearance before returning to training.

Any player suspected of having a concussion **must not return to play in the same game or training session** and should be medically assessed as soon as possible.

## **AFL CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

- A trained first aider must be present at every game.
- Players with suspected concussions must be immediately withdrawn from play.
- Players must observe a **minimum 21 day mandatory break** from matches.
- Players must obtain **written medical clearance** from a qualified medical practitioner (GP, sports doctor, or neurologist) before resuming training or playing.
- Full-contact training is only allowed once the player is symptom-free and physically fit.
- Players with symptoms persisting for more than **five days** should seek specialist evaluation.

### **Guidelines for Players Aged 5-17**

- A child must return to school/learning without worsening symptoms before resuming play.
- Symptom assessment requires input from parents and/or teachers.
- Extended school absences are uncommon; if needed, specialist advice should be sought.
- Players must follow a gradual return-to-play protocol under medical supervision.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Role of the player

- Come off the ground when asked by the medical staff, trainer or coach
- Be honest with how you are feeling both at the time of injury and during the recovery process.
- Take care of yourself and your teammates – if someone is not right, let the trainer or medical staff know
- Be patient with your return to play program. Like any other injury, the process is designed to return you to play safely, not as quickly as possible

### Parents/Guardians

- Trust the sports trainer and NEVER try to override their advice
- Be accepting that the injury is likely to see your child out of action for a period not less than 21 days from sustaining the injury
- Look after your child – do not leave them alone for 24-48 hours
- Download “Head check App” for guidance in recovery phase
  - [Home | HeadCheck Concussion App](#)
- Allow an initial period of rest and sleep especially if at a time when expected to sleep (i.e. night time)
- Take your child to a doctor for a medical assessment if they have sustained a concussion or suspected concussion – please ensure the professional engaged is provided with ALL information pertaining to the incident (provided by your team trainer)
- Support your child’s entire recovery
- Continue to monitor their progress throughout the recovery
- Make sure they have fully recovered and are confident to return (If this goes past 21 days, we encourage you to seek the advice of a concussion specialist – details available upon request)
- Follow club/AFL guidelines for returning players to training
- Provide accurate feedback regarding symptom resolution
- Submit medical clearance before the player resumes training and prior to return to play.
- Inform coaching staff of concussions sustained outside the club (e.g. school /sports).
  - *Derived from play.afl management of sport related concussion (Link below)*

### Coaches

- Adhere to the AFL Coaches Code of Conduct
- Accept the recommendations of the sports trainers and never try to overrule the trainer (or question the player who is reporting/suffering symptoms)
- Withdraw players from matches for the mandatory 21 day period.
- Ensure that your player has been medical cleared to full contact training and playing.
- Follow AFL Play concussion management guidelines.
- Adhere to the four stages of return to play
  1. A brief period of relative rest (24-48 hours)
  2. A period of recovery
  3. A graded loading program (with medical clearance required for return to full contact training)
  4. Unrestricted return to play
- [Concussion Guidelines v5 \(AH comments\).pdf](#)
- Set the culture of the team in terms of concussion management

## **Trainers**

- Know the guidelines for the Management of Sport-related concussion in AFL
- Maintain up-to-date Sports trainer certification as per AFL/EFNL requirements
- Complete online Concussion training via Play AFL website
- Assess the player and ask others who might have witnessed the incident
- Err on the side of caution
- Do not allow coaches, parents or teammates to influence your decisions
- No one can override your decision to take a player off for assessment if you believe there may be a concussion
- The trainer (in the absence of medical staff) is responsible for the medical care of the players
- Complete and provide copies of the below forms for injured players parents
  - [Match-Day Head-Injury-13-and-older.pdf](#)
  - [Match-Day-Head-Injury-12-and-under 0.pdf](#)
- Carry a **Concussion Recognition Tool (CRT6)** during matches and training. [The Concussion Recognition Tool 6 \(CRT6\)](#)
- Complete an injury report and submit online for review by the Trainer Co-ordinator within 24 hours of the injury occurring
- Provide parents with medical clearance forms for completion by a doctor
- Ensure all documents are uploaded to the OPEROO platform
- [Medical-Clearance-Form 0.pdf](#)
- Refer Parents to this policy for resources on concussion and injury management

## **Team Managers**

- Know the guidelines for the Management of Sport-related concussion in AFL
- Ensure compliance with the 21 day mandatory break and subsequent return to training/playing schedule.
- Confirm receipt of medical clearance before the player resumes training/playing.
- Escalate any absence of medical certification to the club executive/trainer coordinator

## **Ferntree Gully Eagles Junior Football Club**

- Ensure the presence of accredited trainers at all matches
- Incorporate concussion management into coaching accreditation programs
- Distribute concussion guidelines annually to players, parents, and coaches
- Provide educational resources on concussion awareness
- Maintain concussion records securely for **seven years**. (OPEROO)
- Support the withdrawal of players who fail to provide medical clearance
- Address grievances through the Club Executive Committee

## **SCOPE OF POLICY**

The Ferntree Gully Eagles Junior Football Club is responsible for monitoring and managing concussions **only** during club matches and training sessions. Concussions sustained outside club activities are considered actionable and will be treated accordingly. It is the expectation that parents/players will report-inform the medical staff and coaches of **any** head injury sustained though accident/other sporting incidents – Brains do not grow back

This policy reflects our commitment to player safety and aligns with AFL concussion management best practices. By adhering to these guidelines, we ensure a safer playing environment for all participants.

## **RESOURCES**

[The-Management-of-Sport-Related-Concussion-in-Australian-Football-Mar-24.pdf](#)  
[Concussion Guidelines v5 \(AH comments\).pdf](#)  
[Medical-Clearance-Form\\_0.pdf](#)  
[SCOAT6-v8.pdf](#)  
[Match-Day Head-Injury-13-and-older.pdf](#)  
[Match-Day-Head-Injury-12-and-under\\_0.pdf](#)  
[The Concussion Recognition Tool 6 \(CRT6\)](#)  
[Home | HeadCheck Concussion App](#)  
[Sport Concussion Assessment Tool 6 \(SCAT6\)](#)  
[Child SCAT6](#)

## **POLICY REVIEW**

This Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant, practical and that it reflects Community AFL Concussion Management guidelines/expectations and legal requirements.

The Policy will be reviewed in the first instance by the clubs Trainer Co-Ordinator and Executive Committee.

This document was tabled to the Executive committee and the above stated Policy was voted upon and endorsed/accepted by majority vote.

**Ferntree Gully Eagles Junior Football Club**  
**Executive & General Committee**  
**March 2025**