



## Solent Seahawks Academy American Football Concussion Protocol and Guidance

Solent Seahawks Academy are committed to ensuring that concussion protocols are adhered according to BAFA guidance as stated <https://www.bafca.co.uk/concussion-awareness/> and <https://rules.bafra.info/docs/2017/BAFA/Concussion%20Protocol%20FINAL.pdf>

We encourage all our coaches, staff and players to read this guidance and make themselves aware of the potential risks and dangers of concussion within the game. BAFA (in common with many other sports governing bodies) mandates the following return to play protocol.

<b>Rehabilitation stage</b>	<b>Exercise recommended</b>	<b>Objective</b>
1. Rest	Complete physical and cognitive rest without symptoms.	Recovery
2. Light aerobic exercise	Walking, swimming or stationary cycling. Keep intensity <70% maximum predicted heart rate. No resistance training.	Increase heart rate and assess recovery.
3. Sport-specific exercise	Running drills. No contact drills.	Add exercise and coordination, and cognitive load. Assess recovery.
4. Non-contact training drills	Progression to more complex training drills, e.g. passing drills. May start progressive resistance training.	Add exercise and coordination, and cognitive load. Assess recovery.
5. Full contact practice	Normal training activities.	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff. Assess recovery.
6. Return to play	Full activities in game situations.	Safe return to play once fully recovered.

Players must have returned to work/study before starting physical activity (stage 2).

It is recommended that a medical practitioner confirms recovery before entering stage 5 (full contact practice). Some GPs are happy to clear a player to return to play, but formally clearing players to return to sport is not their role. It is however considered by most experts in concussion that good routine clinical management should include a review by the GP at an appropriate time to confirm recovery and satisfy themselves that there are no other underlying conditions. An appropriate time is considered to be around the average time for expected full recovery and before returning to activities with a recognisable risk of head impacts. This fits nicely with the GRTP at around 18 days for adults and 21 days for children.

The GP does not need to provide a letter, as verbal confirmation by the player or parent/guardian for U18s is acceptable. Clubs and schools are advised to make a record of this verbal confirmation. GPs may charge a fee for providing a letter. If it is not feasible for a coach to supervise stages 2-4, these may be done by the player in their own time, or by children supervised by parents with appropriate guidance. Alternatively, the protocol may be extended with each stage being completed at successive training sessions.

If any symptoms recur while going through the stages, an adult player must rest for 24 hours (without symptoms) and then return to the previous stage. The rest period should be 48 hours for players under 19.



We ask that all of our players or their parents liaise with our coaches fully during a concussion protocol period within our sport, but including and equally as importantly during a concussion incident incurred during the practice of a sport outside of American Football.



We adhere to the following child return to play pathway, This applies to all players under the age of 18 or participating at under-19 level.

Stage	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
Duration	14 days symptom free	48 hours	48 hours	48 hours	48 hours	Fit To Play
Minimum elapsed days since injury	14	15	17	19	21	Day 23 earliest return to play

The responsibility for managing a graduated return to play is shared by the player, their coaches and their club's welfare management. Depending on the circumstances, BAFA may take disciplinary action against anyone who is party to a breach of this protocol without specialist medical advice.

Players must remember their duty to inform their coach and/or Welfare Officer of their condition and any recurrence of it. Teammates should be alerted to watch out for signs.

It is a player's responsibility (or their parents if they are a child) to obtain a medical review before returning to play.

Coaches must be particularly aware of the stage of a player's recovery and not ask them to do too much. They must always be alert for returning signs of a concussion and cease the player's activity immediately if they are observed.

Where a player has received specific individual advice or restrictions from a medical practitioner, these should be reported to their club and coach, and must be adhered to at all times until lifted.

Even after a graduated return to play has been completed, the player and their coaches must remain vigilant for any return of symptoms.

There are a number of resources available to support the education of personnel, players and their families. Those provided by England Rugby (<http://www.englandrugby.com/concussion>) and the Football Association (<http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/coach/concussion>) are recommended.