



Concussion Management Policy – Adoption of Row Ontario’s Policy
Leander Boat Club of Hamilton
Version 1
Approved 3-Nov-2021

Scope

This policy applies to all registered participants, coaches, volunteers and individuals involved with the club in any capacity. This policy will apply to all rowing activities including but not limited to ongoing registered activities, special events or groups and regattas.

Policy

Leander Boat Club (LBC) has agreed to adopt the Row Ontario Concussion Management Policy for all rowing activities associated with our club to be in compliance with Ontario laws and Row Ontario policies.

The Policy as set by our Provincial Sport Organization is appropriate to all our rowing activities and ensures alignment with best practices as well as legal requirements.

The policy and procedures as approved by Row Ontario on February 20th 2019 and updated Sept 25th 2019 is attached. We commit to ensuring we update our policy and procedures as Row Ontario updates their document.

Operational Procedures

LBC will follow the procedures as laid out in the Row Ontario procedures incorporating sign off of review of resources and Codes of Conduct into our registration process.

Copies of the Concussion Recognition Tool 5 and the Concussion Removal and Return Handout Document will be available in First Aid Kits as well as in the boathouse.

We will take responsibility for decision making in the removal of a participant both during our activities and while traveling to events with participants representing the club. If someone is removed, our team will ensure they communicate the required information and the incident will be reported and their progression through Return to Rowing tracked, ensuring they do not return to the water without written medical clearance.



Scope

This policy will be enforced for all ROWONTARIO official team activities and all programs with ROWONTARIO staff or volunteers as instructors or facilitators. This includes ROWONTARIO hosted events. The policy applies to all provincial team members, program participants, staff and volunteers of all ages while involved in ROWONTARIO activities.

Policy

ROWONTARIO is focused on ensuring the wellbeing and safety of all participants, members, volunteers and staff. We recognize the potential severity of a head injury and the commitment and intent behind research to manage concussions. We are committed to educating those involved with ROWONTARIO, creating awareness to help prevent injuries and appropriately managing any suspected concussions and diagnosed concussions.

ROWONTARIO's Concussion Policy is committed to the following actions in regards to concussions:

1. Committed to increasing awareness regarding what concussions are and the potential for serious complications.
2. Enforcing procedures and training that promotes preventative actions to help reduce the number of concussions.
3. Providing procedures that support ROWONTARIO staff, volunteers, umpires and athletes in ensuring quick recognition and removal of any individual with a suspected concussion from ROWONTARIO activities.
4. Ensure that following a suspected concussion there are clear steps for both the individual and ROWONTARIO to follow before a return to sport occurs to ensure the focus is on the individual's long-term health.

Note this policy, and associated procedures, complements ROWONTARIO's comprehensive emergency procedures. Due to the potential seriousness of concussions and the need for increased awareness and training around concussions, ROWONTARIO created this additional document specific for concussion management and the associated return to sport procedures.

*Board approved last: February 20th 2019
Review date: February 20th 2019*

Operational Procedures

Concussion Education and Prevention

ROWONTARIO will conduct annual training for all ROWONTARIO staff and volunteers who lead programs or coach teams. This educational session will include up to date information on what concussions are, how to recognize potential concussions and best practices on concussion prevention in rowing. Training will also include the contents of this concussion policy including their roles and responsibilities in recognizing and removing athletes/participants who are involved in a situation that potentially could result in a concussion or have a concussion.



Additionally, staff and volunteers will be trained on the education components for participants and parents, and the related information in the Athlete Code of Conduct.

Regatta officials and umpires will be trained in concussion education as part of their ongoing training. Before each ROWONTARIO event, officials will be reminded of the concussion policy and procedures.

Concussion education resources will be made available to ROWONTARIO participants (and their parents/guardians in cases of minors) to help build awareness and understanding of concussions. During practices and programs, coaches and instructors will remind participants of the need to take care around the docks as well as while moving and setting up boats, also ensuring everything is working properly. Ongoing reminders for participants to be aware of potential situations where head injuries could occur will help build awareness and prevention related to concussions.

ROWONTARIO Provincial Team members who engage in dangerous or reckless behaviour that could potentially create a high risk for a concussion causing situation will be subject to disciplinary actions as described in the Athlete Code of Conduct.

Recognition, Removal and Referral

If any individual suffers any kind of injury where there is potential for there to have been direct or indirect force to the head, neck or face, and is experiencing or demonstrating any concussion related signs or symptoms, the individual will be removed from activity immediately and rest. The staff or volunteer in charge of the program or practice will err on the side of caution in their decision making. Under ROWONTARIO's Concussion Policy, all ROWONTARIO Team Members recognize the authority of their on-site coach.

In competition, coaches, regatta officials, umpires and athletes all have a responsibility to communicate openly and honestly about situations where direct or indirect hits to a head occur. If a situation occurs where a concussion is possible, the head coach will communicate with the athlete, umpires and regatta officials and parents/guardian as appropriate. The coach in attendance at the competition will make the decision for their athlete if they can continue based on a direct or indirect hit to the head.

At ROWONTARIO hosted events, (regattas, camps and courses etc.) the senior staff member on site who is responsible for the event will make the final decision as to a participant's removal from activities.

ROWONTARIO staff and volunteers recognize that symptoms may not appear immediately and that concussions can occur in many different situations. In the case of a suspected concussion, the individual may not be in a condition to assess themselves or make appropriate decisions.

For individuals under 18, all suspected concussions or situations that occurred that potentially could result in a concussion will be reported to the guardian. The guardian should monitor the individual for delayed signs and symptoms for the next 72 hours.

All individuals of any age with a suspected concussion will be referred to a medical doctor (or nurse practitioner) for medical assessment and diagnosis as per the Return to Sport



Procedures. Additionally upon removal each individual, and their parent/guardian if they are under 18, will be given a handout detailing ROWONTARIO's concussion procedures for removal from sport and return to sport. The Coach will also ensure they are aware of their responsibility to disclose any concussion diagnosis to any other sport organization they are registered with and/or their school.

If a direct force to the head results in immediate injury or "red flag" signs and symptoms of a concussion, ROWONTARIO's Emergency Procedures in partnership with the facility's location specific Emergency Action Plan will immediately be followed.

(More information on signs and symptoms of a concussion as well as appropriate response needed for various signs can be found in our concussion resources provided to coaches, instructors, parents and athletes and available within the ROWONTARIO Emergency Procedures as well as Appendix A of this policy).

Reporting

As per ROWONTARIO's Emergency Procedures, any incident resulting in injury or removal from activity will be reported on an ROWONTARIO's Incident Report Form. These are to be submitted (electronic images acceptable) to the ROWONTARIO Executive Director within 24 hours.

The Executive Director, or designate, tracks all incident reports for patterns and trends as well as individual situations.

The coach will keep a copy and update the report to document the athlete's progression to return to sport regularly updating the Executive Director until the incident is closed with the receipt of medical clearance which will be added to the report and securely filed. In documenting the incident and follow up all of ROWONTARIO's Privacy Policy will be followed.

Participant Disclosure

If an individual discloses, or staff/volunteers become aware through any means, that an individual suffered a possible concussion through other activities they will be unable to participate in ROWONTARIO activities. Discovery or disclosure of a suspected concussion will be reported on an athlete disclosure form to ROWONTARIO's Executive Director within 24 hours, following procedures for incident reporting.

Members of the ROWONTARIO Team who fail to disclose a possible concussion as described in their Code of Conduct may be subject to discipline as described in the Athlete Code of Conduct.

The individual's return to ROWONTARIO activities will be treated the same as individuals who incur concussions during ROWONTARIO activities.

Returning to Rowing

If removed from rowing due to a suspected concussion the athlete may return once they have confirmed to the coach that they have undergone an assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner and have not been diagnosed as having a concussion.



Concussion Management & Return to Play

If diagnosed with a concussion, each individual will have their own individualized and medically supervised Return to Sport plan. The plan is a graduated strategy to ensure the long-term health of the individual. ROWONTARIO is committed to supporting the individual in their recovery and have provided a rowing focused suggested starting Return to Sport Plan. For athletes at any level of education, we work to ensure a Return to Learn strategy be followed before Return to Sport and focus the individual on commencing their educational components first.

Before a participant or athlete is permitted to return to any ROWONTARIO led practice or program after experiencing signs or symptoms of a concussion, or having reported a concussion, they will need to submit proof of medical clearance that permits them to return to participating in a full range of physical activities.

The written clearance must be provided by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner and submitted to the coach or instructor who will forward to the Executive Director. The clearance will be filed with ROWONTARIO's original copy of the incident report or athlete disclosure.

Due to the unpredictability of water conditions, they can rejoin activities on the water once they have medical clearance to return to normal training activities (Stage 5 of the Standard Return to Sport Strategy as found in Appendix B).

Once cleared, coaches and instructors will gradually build the activity level to help progress the individual slowly. This will include ensuring the first time on the water is in mild weather conditions.

Competition (Stage 6) will only be permitted once they have demonstrated symptom free completion of a minimum of two on the water training experiences involving a mix of conditions.

(The time required to complete this may depend on the weather conditions occurring in the location. The coach/instructor will work with the individual focusing on an individualized progression with the individual's long-term health as the priority.)

Last reviewed: September 25th 2019

Operational procedures are not approved by the Board of Directors. Operational procedures are approved by the Executive Director.

Appendix A – Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion

Pocket CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL™

To help identify concussion in children, youth and adults

RECOGNIZE & REMOVE

Concussion should be suspected **if one or more** of the following visible clues, signs, symptoms or errors in memory questions are present.

1. Visible clues of suspected concussion

Any one or more of the following visual clues can indicate a possible concussion:

- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Lying motionless on ground/slow to get up
- Unsteady on feet / Balance problems or falling over/incoordination
- Grabbing/clutching of head
- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Confused/Not aware of plays or events

2. Signs and symptoms of suspected concussion

Presence of any one or more of the following signs & symptoms may suggest a concussion:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of consciousness - Seizure or convulsion - Balance problems - Nausea or vomiting - Drowsiness - More emotional - Irritability - Sadness - Fatigue or low energy - Nervous or anxious - "Don't feel right" - Difficulty remembering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Headache - Dizziness - Confusion - Feeling slowed down - "Pressure in head" - Blurred vision - Sensitivity to light - Amnesia - Feeling like "in a fog" - Neck Pain - Sensitivity to noise - Difficulty concentrating
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3. Memory function

Failure to answer any of these questions correctly may suggest a concussion.

- "What venue are we at today?"
- "Which half is it now?"
- "Who scored last in this game?"
- "What team did you play last week/game?"
- "Did your team win the last game?"

Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PLAY, and should not be returned to activity until they are assessed medically. Athletes with a suspected concussion should not be left alone and should not drive a motor vehicle.

It is recommended that, in all cases of suspected concussion, the player is referred to a medical professional for diagnosis and guidance as well as return to play decisions, even if the symptoms resolve.

RED FLAGS

if ANY of the following are reported then the player should be safely and immediately removed from the field. If no qualified medical professional is available, consider transporting by ambulance for urgent medical assessment:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athlete complains of neck pain - Increasing confusion or irritability - Repeated vomiting - Seizure or convulsion - Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deteriorating conscious state - Severe or increasing headache - Unusual behaviour change - Double vision
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Remember:

- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid (danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) should be followed.
- Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so
- Do not remove helmet (if present) unless trained to do so.

from McCrory et. al, Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: 8-17 Sports Med 47 (5), 2013

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Appendix B - Return to Sport Plan

A CONCUSSION is a serious event, but you can recover fully from such an injury if the brain is given enough time to rest and recuperate. Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, is a stage-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution.

Each stage must take a **minimum of one day** but could last longer, depending on the athlete and their specific situation.

If symptoms reappear at any stage, go back to the previous stage until symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

STAGE 1: Symptom limited activity – Goal: A gradual reintroduction of activity

After an initial short period of rest of 24-48 hours, light cognitive and physical activity can be initiated as long as they don't worsen symptoms. A physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning the staged process to return.

STAGE 2: Light aerobic exercise – Goal: Increased heart rate

Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. The athlete should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day.

Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

No symptoms? Proceed to Stage 3 after 24 hours.

STAGE 3: More Diverse Cardio – Goal: Add movement

Activities such as light running or gentle body weight resistance exercises can begin at stage 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high speed stops or hitting a baseball with a bat.

Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

No symptoms? Proceed to Stage 4 after 24 hours.

STAGE 4: Building Cardio with Increased Cognitive Challenges

Goal: Exercise, coordination, and increased thinking

Activities such as indoor rowing and resistance training can be added to activities from previous stages.

Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

No symptoms? The time needed to progress will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the athlete. Proceed to Stage 5 only after medical clearance.

STAGE 5: On water practice, once cleared by a doctor – Goal: Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff

Coaches and instructors will allow return to the water in gradually challenging conditions.

Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

No symptoms? Proceed to Stage 6 after minimum of two on water situations without symptoms.

STAGE 6: Competition

Return to sport with normal activities

*** Core of document from Parachute Canada (parachutecanada.org/concussion) Revised June 15 2017 with specific to rowing additions.*

Appendix C – Handout for any Athlete Removed with Suspected Concussion

ROWONTARIO
Concussions
Removal from Sport Procedures



We are concerned about the long term health of all our participants. We have instituted a Concussion Management Policy to help protect their health and in compliance with Ontario's Rowan's Law.

The policy is that if any individual suffers any kind of injury where there is potential for there to have been direct or indirect force to the head, neck, face, or upper body and is experiencing or demonstrating any concussion related signs or symptoms, the individual will be removed from activity immediately.

The designated person to make this decision will be the coach and/or regatta host. In the case of a suspected concussion, the individual may not be in a condition to assess themselves or make appropriate decisions. The decision will be made erring on the side of caution in support of the long term health of the participant.

For individuals under 18, all suspected concussions or situations that occurred that potentially could result in a concussion will be reported to their guardian. The guardian should monitor the individual for delayed signs and symptoms for the next 72 hours.

All individuals of any age with a suspected concussion should see to a medical doctor (or nurse practitioner) for medical assessment and diagnosis.

A CONCUSSION is a serious event, but you can recover fully from such an injury if the brain is given enough time to rest and recuperate. Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, is a stage-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution.

*If diagnosed with a concussion, please turn over for a rowing specific return to sport protocol. Remember that each stage of the return protocol must take a **minimum of one day** but could last longer, depending on the athlete and their specific situation.*

*For more information and ROWONTARIO's complete Concussion Policy please go to:
www.rowontario.ca/rowontario-concussion-management-information/*



ROWONTARIO

Return to Sport Protocol



If you are diagnosed with a concussion, follow the stages to return under medical guidance

STAGE 1: Symptom limited activity – Goal: A gradual reintroduction of activity

After an initial short period of rest of 24-48 hours, light cognitive and physical activity can be initiated as long as they don't worsen symptoms. A physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning the staged process to return.

STAGE 2: Light aerobic exercise – Goal: Increased heart rate

Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. The athlete should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day.

Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

No symptoms? Proceed to Stage 3 after 24 hours.

STAGE 3: More diverse cardio – Goal: Add movement

Activities such as light running or gentle body weight resistance exercises can begin at stage 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high speed stops or hitting a baseball with a bat.

Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

No symptoms? Proceed to Stage 4 after 24 hours.

STAGE 4: Building upon cardio with increased cognitive challenges

Goal: Exercise, coordination, and increased thinking

Activities such as indoor rowing and resistance training can be added to activities from previous stages.

Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

No symptoms? The time needed to progress will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the athlete. **Proceed to Step 5 only after medical clearance.**

STAGE 5: On water practice, once cleared by a doctor – Goal: Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff

Coaches and instructors will allow return to the water in gradually challenging conditions.

Symptoms? Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

No symptoms? Proceed to Step 6 after minimum of two on water situations without symptoms.

STAGE 6: Competition

Return to sport with normal activities



**Concussion Code of Conduct
Athlete and Participant**

In recognition of the potential seriousness of a concussion, I, _____,
commit to following the concussion protocols and expectations highlighted below.

I will help prevent concussions by:

- Respecting the rules of my sport.
- Being committed to fair play and respect for all, including other athletes, coaches, and umpires.

I will care for my health and safety by taking concussions seriously, and I understand that:

- A concussion is a brain injury that can have both short and long-term effects.
- A blow to my head, face or neck, or body that causes the brain to move around inside the skull may cause a concussion.
- I don't need to lose consciousness to have had a concussion.
- I have a commitment to concussion recognition and reporting, including if I think I might have a concussion I should stop participating in further training, practice or competition immediately and tell a coach; as well as reporting to my coach if I think another participant has a concussion.
- Continuing to participate in further training, practice or competition with a possible concussion increases my risk of more severe, longer lasting symptoms, and increases my risk of other injuries.

I will not hide concussion symptoms. I will speak up for myself and others.

- I will not hide my symptoms. I will tell a coach, umpire, parent or another adult I trust if I experience any symptoms of concussion.
- If someone else tells me about concussion symptoms, or I see signs they might have a concussion, I will tell a coach, umpire, parent or another adult I trust so they can help.
- I understand that if I have a suspected concussion, I will be removed from sport and that I will not be able to return to training, practice or competition until I undergo a medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner and have been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition.
- I have a commitment to sharing any pertinent information regarding incidents of removal from sport with my school and any other sport organization where I am registered.

I will take the time I need to recover, because it is important for my health.

- I understand my commitment to following the return-to-sport process.
- I will respect my coaches, parents, health-care professionals, and medical doctors/nurse practitioners, regarding my health and safety.

By signing here, I acknowledge that I have fully reviewed and commit to this Concussion Code of Conduct.

Athlete: _____

Parent/Guardian (of athletes who are under 18 years of age): _____

Date: _____



Concussion Code of Conduct Coaches

In recognition of the potential seriousness of a concussion, I, _____, commit to following the concussion protocols and expectations as highlighted below:

I can help prevent concussions through my:

- Efforts to help my athletes develop their skills and strength so they can participate to the best of their abilities.
- Respect for the rules of my sport and efforts to ensure that my athletes do too.
- Commitment to fair play and respect for all and ensuring my athletes respect others and play fair.

I will care for the health and safety of all participants by taking concussions seriously. I understand that:

- A concussion is a brain injury that can have both short and long-term effects.
- A blow to the head, face, neck, or body may cause the brain to move around inside the skull and result in a concussion.
- A person doesn't need to lose consciousness to have had a concussion.
- An athlete with a suspected concussion should stop participating in training, practice or competition immediately.
- I have a commitment to concussion recognition and reporting. This includes supporting my athletes when they report signs or symptoms of possible concussion, acting on any reports if an individual suspects that another individual may have sustained a concussion and watching my athletes and other athletes for any situations where a concussion could be suspected.
- Continuing to participate in further training, practice or competition with a suspected concussion increases a person's risk of more severe, longer lasting symptoms, and increases their risk of other injuries or even death.

I will create an environment where participants feel safe and comfortable speaking up. I will:

- Encourage athletes not to hide their symptoms, but to tell me, an umpire, parent or another adult they trust if they experience **any** symptoms of concussion.
- Lead by example. I will tell a fellow coach or administrator and seek medical attention by a physician or nurse practitioner if I am experiencing any concussion symptoms.
- Understand and respect that any athlete with a suspected concussion must be removed from sport and not permitted to return until they undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner and have been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition.
- Commit to providing opportunities before and after each training, practice and competition to enable athletes to discuss potential issues related to concussions.

I will support all participants to take the time they need to recover.

- I understand my commitment to supporting the athlete through their return-to-sport process.
- I understand the athletes will have to be cleared by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to rowing, including staying off the water.



- I will respect my fellow coaches, parents, medical doctors/nurse practitioners and any decisions made with regards to the health and safety of my athletes.

By signing here, I acknowledge that I have fully reviewed and commit to this Concussion Code of Conduct.

Signature

Date