



PRETORIA BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

Sanatorium

Concussion Management Programme

Concussion is a serious injury, as many of the PBHS boys who were concussed this past year will affirm. The physical symptoms like headaches, dizziness, poor balance and blurred vision are relatively easy to recognise: however concussion also affects memory, reasoning, concentration levels and other functions of the brain that are harder to pinpoint. A boy who has had a concussion needs to be closely monitored in order to ensure that no permanent brain damage occurs. Recent research indicates that a proper concussion management programme and a specific return-to-school / return-to-play guideline are necessary for each person who has suffered a concussion, regardless of the severity of the concussion. If boys with impaired judgment return to playing sport too soon, they may suffer a second concussion which may have a disastrous physical and mental consequence. The website www.sportsconcussion.co.za will give you more information on this subject.

Concussion is caused by a hard object or surface hitting the head, or a violent movement that causes whiplash in which the brain is flung against the inside of the skull. This can happen from numerous causes: a hockey ball or stick, cricket balls, collisions during water polo, soccer, basketball and rugby. Other causes have been motor bike, quad bike, bicycle and car accidents as well as horse-riding accidents, falls out of trees, off trampolines, falls against doors or lockers and slipping on wet floors.

As a school we are very aware of the pressures on a young sportsman to ignore a “mild knock” or concussive episode and to resume playing sport as if nothing has happened. This could be because he does not want to lose his place in the team, would not be considered for a higher team or a provincial team, or does not want to let his team mates down. Often the coach will report an incident to the San Sisters for follow-up. Team coaches demand a **clear guideline** as to when they can **safely** accept a player back into their squad after a concussion and are very keen on their players doing this Baseline Assessment so that a rehabilitation programme can be worked out for each boy.)

The Sports Medical Services at the University of Pretoria High Performance Centre is part of the Schools Concussion Programme. The concussion management programme they use is CogSport, which was developed in Australia for Australian Football. At the beginning of the year each **new boy at the school** who registers for CogSport will do a Baseline Assessment: this is the best time as the probability of his having been concussed recently is low. The result of this test sets the baseline against which a boy will be measured should he be concussed after this and need to be assessed. As well as using computerised testing, each boy who has a suspected

concussion is examined by a sports physician. Repeat assessments, usually on a weekly basis, until a full return to school and active play, are done by the sports physician.

Boys already at the school will have the opportunity to repeat their Baseline Assessment near the end of each year.