BRITISH TAEKWONDO COUNCIL

Safeguarding – Protecting Children Polices and Procedures

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RETURNING TO TAEKWONDO TRAINING AFTER A HEAD INJURY

Anyone who has a head injury during a Taekwondo event needs to immediately stop all activity and not return to play that day. Being active again before the brain returns to normal functioning increases the person's risk of having a more serious brain injury.

Every person involved in a Taekwondo event (every instructor, coach, player, parent and trainer) needs to be trained to know the symptoms of a concussion. And all need to know the importance of getting medical help when a student has a head injury.

The decision about when a student can safely return to training must be made by a doctor. The doctor decides on a case-by-case basis. Things that help the doctor decide when the student can return to training include:

- The symptoms the student has.
- The student's medical history.
- The student's concussion history.
- The student's medicine use.
- The type of event, competition, training session.
- The student's ability to stand and keep his or her balance.
- The students' ability to pay attention and to answer questions that test learning and memory.
- How quickly the student can solve problems.

Doctors and other concussion specialists agree that a student must not return to training until symptoms are completely gone, both at rest and during exercise or exertion. Using medicine to improve concussion symptoms is not the same thing as being symptom-free. Medicines must be stopped before a student can be considered symptom-free. **Children and teens have longer recovery times**. So they may have to wait longer before they can return to training.

The first treatment for a concussion is rest, both physical and mental. The return to training needs to occur in a gradual, step-by-step way:[1]

1. No activity. This means complete physical and mental rest.
2. Light Taekwondo activity. This can include exercise at less than 70% maximum heart rate. No resistance training is included in this step.
3. Taekwondo-specific exercise. This includes drills but no head impact.
4. Non-contact training drills. The student may also begin light resistance training.
5. Full contact practice ie competition. **A medical professional must agree that the student is ready,** then the student can participate in normal training.
6. Return to training. This is the final step and allows the student to join in normal Taekwondo activities

The student must be symptom-free for 28 Days at the current level of activity before moving on to the next step. If one or more symptoms return, the student needs to go back to the previous level of activity with no symptoms for at least 28 Days before trying to do more. **A doctor must always make the final decision about whether a student is ready to return to full-contact play.**

These general rules apply to return to training after a first concussion. After more than one concussion, the student will most likely need a longer recovery time. Because the risk for a second concussion is greatest within 10 days of the first concussion, it's very important to make sure the student is completely recovered before he or she returns to training. A second injury, even if it is not a head injury, could cause permanent brain damage or death.