



South London Topcats Brixton Topcats

Concussion & Head Injury POLICY

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Purpose and Scope

South London Topcats – Brixton Topcats Basketball Club (“the Club”) takes the health and safety of all its members seriously.

Concussion is a brain injury and must be treated as such. This policy sets out the Club’s procedures for recognising, responding to and managing suspected concussion in any player, coach official, or volunteer participating in Club activities.

This Policy applies to all training sessions, matches and other Club activities, and to all age groups – junior and adult.

Legal and Governance Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Basketball England Concussion Guidelines (September 2025)
- UK Government Concussion in Sport Guidelines
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Children Act 1989 and 2004 (in relation to junior members)
- Basketball England’s Club Standards requirements for affiliated clubs

What is Concussion?

Concussion is a brain injury caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head or body that is transmitted to the brain. The following are important principles:

- Concussion does not always involve loss of consciousness
- Symptoms may not appear immediately and can develop over hours
- It is not possible to “play through” concussion safely
- Repeated concussions, particularly in young people, can have serious long-term consequences

Recognising Concussion – Signs and Symptoms

Any player showing one or more of the following must be immediately removed from play.

Red Flags – seek emergency care (999) immediately:

- Seizure or convulsion
- Loss of consciousness (even briefly)
- Repeated vomiting
- Neck pain or tenderness
- Double vision
- Severe or worsening headache
- Confusion. Agitation, or unusual behaviour

Warning Signs – remove from play and monitor:

- Headache or pressure in the head
- Nausea
- Dizziness or balance problems

- Blurred or double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling “foggy” or slowed down
- Memory problems or confusion
- “Not feeling right”

Immediate Response – “If in Doubt, Sit Them Out”

If concussion is suspected, the following steps must be taken immediately:

- Remove the player from play immediately. Do not allow the player to return to any activity, even if they insist, they are fine.
- Do not leave the player alone
- If any red flag symptoms are present, call 999 immediately
- For junior players, contact parents or guardians immediately
- If a qualified first aider is present, they should assess the player using the SCAT6 or child SCAT6 tool (Section 7).
- Monitor the player for any deterioration in symptoms

The principle “If in Doubt, Sit Them Out” applies at all times and at all levels of play. No coach, parent, or player may override this.

No Same-Day Return to Play

No player suspected of having sustained a concussion may return to any sport-related activity – including training, warm-ups, or any physical exertion – on the same day. This rule applies regardless of whether the player reports feeling better.

There are no exceptions to this rule.

Assessment Tools

The following assessment tools are approved for use at the Club:

- SCAT6 (Sport Concussion Assessment Tool, version 6) – for players aged 13 and over
- Child SCAT6 – for players aged 8 to 12

These tools support the identification of concussion and guide removal from play decisions. They do not replace medical diagnosis. Coaches and first aiders are not expected to provide a clinical diagnosis; their role is to identify warning signs and follow this protocol.

Copies of the SCAT6 and Child SCAT 6 are available from Basketball England and should be kept in the Club’s first aid kit

Graduated Return-to-Play (G RTP) Protocol

Following a suspected or confirmed concussion, no player may return to contact training or competition until completing all stages of the following Graduated Return-to-Play (G RTP) protocol. Each stage requires a minimum of 24 hours. If symptoms return at any stage, the player must return to the previous stage, remain symptoms-free, and then progress again.

- Stage 1 – Rest: Physical and cognitive rest until symptom-free. Objective: Recovery
- Stage 2 – Light aerobic exercise: Walking or light swimming; no ball skills or resistance training. Objective: Increase heart rate without risk.
- Stage 3 – Sport-specific exercise: Basketball drills without contact. Objective: Add movement

patterns.

Stage 4 – Non-contact training drills: More complex drills; player may return to team training without contact. Objective Exercise, coordination and cognitive load.

Stage 5 – Full-contact practice: Only following medical clearance (see Section 9). Objective: Restore confidence and allow caching staff assessment.

Stage 6 – Return to competition: Normal match play. Objective Full return.

A minimum of five days is required to complete all stages, even if the player is symptom-free from Day 1.

Medical Sign-Off Requirement

No player may advance to Stage 5 (full contact practice) or Stage 6 (return to competition) without written sign-off from a qualified medical practitioner – a GP, A&E doctor, sports doctor, or physiotherapist with appropriate concussion management qualifications. The practitioner must confirm the player is symptom-free and medically cleared to return to contact sport.

The Club Welfare Officer or lead coach must retain a copy of the medical certificate for any player returning from concussion. This should be filed as part of the Accident Book record for the incident.

Roles and Responsibilities

Club Welfare Officer (CWO):

- Holds overall responsibility for this policy
- Ensure coaches, volunteers, and members understand the protocol
- Maintains records of concussion incidents and GRTP progression.

Director of Basketball Operations and Coaches:

- Implement this protocol at all training sessions and matches
- Remove players from play when concussions is suspected
- Communicate with parents or guardians of junior players at the time of any incident
- Complete an Accident Book entry for every head injury, regardless of severity

All Coaches and Volunteers:

- Know and apply the “If in Doubt, Sit Them Out” principle
- Never pressure a player to return to play
- Report any concerns to the CWO

Adult Players:

- Take personal responsibility for reporting symptoms honestly
- Follow medical advice and the GRTP protocol

Parents and Guardians (Junior Players):

- Inform the coach if their child has recently sustained a head injury or concussion, including outside Club activities
- Follow medical advice and support the GRTP process
- Not pressure coaches or the Club to return a player to play before the protocol is complete

Communication with Parents and Guardians

For any junior player suspected of sustaining a concussion:

Parents or guardians must be contacted at the time of the incident.

A written summary of the incident and next steps (including the GRTP protocol) must be provided – email is acceptable.

Parents must be informed of the medical sign-off requirement before their child returns to Stage 5 or Stage 6.

Medical clearance must be confirmed in writing before the player returns to contact activity.

Record Keeping

Any suspected concussion must be recorded in the Club's Accident Book on the same day as the incident. The record must include:

- Date, time and venue of the incident
- Name and age of the player affected
- Description of the incident and mechanism of injury
- Symptoms observed at the time
- Action taken, including whether emergency services were contacted
- Who was informed, including parents or guardians for junior players
- Date of medical clearance and practitioner details (where applicable)

Records must be retained in accordance with the Club's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy.

Training and Awareness

All coaches and volunteers working with players are expected to:

Be aware of this policy and the GRTP protocol

Hold, or be working towards, a recognized first aid qualification

Be familiar with the SCAT6 and Child SCAT6 assessment tools

Basketball England provides concussion awareness resources at www.basketballengland.co.uk The Club Welfare Officer will ensure this policy is communicated to all coaches, volunteers and members at the start of each season.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Club, or sooner following:

Any update to the Basketball England's Concussion Guidelines

Any concussion incident at the Club

Relevant changes in legislation or national guidance

Any updates to Basketball England guidelines will be incorporated into this policy within 30 days of publication.