



# DARTS ALBERTA POLICY

## CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

POLICY NUMBER: 029

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Replaces Policy Dated: NEW

Policy Revised on: NEW

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## POLICY OBJECTIVES

Darts Alberta is committed to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of its athletes, members, coaches and officials. One might think why does Darts Alberta need a Concussion Management Policy? I've never heard of anyone getting a concussion from playing darts.

Although participating in the sport of darts has a low risk of concussion, a coach might not always see the event that leads to a concussion. This is why it's so important to educate coaches and athletes about the seriousness of concussions and promote open communication about them. Athletes need to be encouraged to let their coaches know how they're feeling. Athletes and parents/guardians need to advise their coaches about any concussion or suspected concussion they've had before (e.g. at school, in another sport, falling off a bike, etc.). Because symptoms can take up to 48 hours to appear, this policy and related protocols are tools to help recognize the symptoms and know what to do even if a player may have received a concussion during an unrelated activity.

During the development of this policy, Darts Alberta has taken these significant factors into consideration:

- According to recent statistics, the majority of all concussions (35%) are the result of slips and falls and a concussion can occur without receiving a direct blow to the head
- During dart practice or competition, there are risks associated with tripping over a raised oche (toe-line) or smaller youth competitors falling off a chair when retrieving their darts
- Dart players participate in other activities that could result in a concussion that is unrelated to our sport
- When diagnosed with a concussion, cognitive activity needs to be restricted during the healing process and the sport of darts is a highly cognitive sport
- Pain-reducing medication during participation can cause more harm than good
- The majority of individuals that have sustained a concussion (85%) heal within 2-3 weeks
- An individual that has sustained a concussion is more at risk of severe injury until healed
- The proper treatment of a concussion is more important than participating in any sport or activity

## DEFINITIONS

**Concussion**—a concussion is a brain injury and medically defined as a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces. In simpler terms:

- A concussion is a brain injury that changes how the brain normally works, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g. headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g. difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioural (e.g. depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g. drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep);
- A concussion may be caused by a fall, bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth (even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow can be serious) and the majority of concussions (90%) occur without a loss of consciousness.

**Suspected Concussion**—means the recognition that an individual appears to have either experienced an injury or impact that may result in a concussion, or is exhibiting unusual behaviour that may be the result of concussion

**Concussion Diagnosis**—means a clinical diagnosis made by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner

# DARTS ALBERTA POLICY

## Education

Darts Alberta requires that every Team Alberta coach receives concussion education which will include:

- Physiology of a concussion
- Early recognition of signs and symptoms of a concussion
- Sport-specific concussion prevention
- Concussion Action Plan (CAP) Protocol
- Return to learn/work protocol following a concussion
- Return to play protocol following a concussion

Darts Alberta will strongly encourage all tournament organizers, community coaches and parents to participate in similar concussion education and is committed to providing them with additional resources (e.g. pocket-sized reference card of Concussion Recognition Tools).

## Prevention—ensuring Safe Play through Concussion Prevention Strategies

Darts Alberta requires that the rules of the game are followed and consistently enforced for all activity within its direct control in order to effectively ensure safe play. Darts Alberta will encourage the same for all member clubs and leagues.

Darts Alberta expects that their coaches and organizers will behave ethically at all times.

## Identification—using the Concussion Action Plan (CAP)

Darts Alberta requires that a [Concussion Action Plan \(CAP\)](#) be available and implemented at all activities and events within its direct care and control in case of a concussion or suspected concussion. The CAP allows for the proper care of an athlete when a suspected concussion occurs and provides appropriate direction to all individuals.

Darts Alberta coaches will record and monitor all signs and symptoms of suspected concussion that may have occurred while participating at darts or may have resulted from an unrelated injury. All signs and symptoms need to be monitored for 48 hours. Should symptoms worsen or there are any “red flag” symptoms while the player is under the coach’s care and control, emergency protocol must be implemented. If a coach will not be with the athlete for the next 48 hours, it is critical to ensure that their caregiver (e.g. parent/guardian/spouse) is provided with Concussion Recognition Tools to know what to look for and what to do if symptoms worsen.

## Documentation—documenting all incidents

Darts Alberta coaches will document any suspicion of Concussion by completing an [Incident Report Form](#), ensuring the following information is gathered:

- A description of the incident and time the incident occurred (e.g. fall during practice or competition, injury prior to practice or competition)
- What symptoms were noticed or self-reported
- What action was taken
- Timeframe to withhold from participation based on medical assessment

## Implementing the Return to Learn/Work Protocol

The [Return to Learn/Work Protocol](#) is a stepwise program starting with cognitive and physical rest. Although these steps should be guided by a healthcare practitioner and the coach may have little involvement in the process, this protocol is included for information.

## Implementing the Return to Play Protocol

Darts Alberta coaches will ensure that the return to learn/work is fully completed and written clearance has been received by a physician prior to continuing to Step 3 of the [Return to Play Protocol](#). Coaches will ensure that after each step is completed, the player waits 24 hours before moving to the next step. The athlete must show no symptoms throughout this process. If symptoms return, wait 24 hours after symptoms have subsided and when returning back start at the previous step.

# CONCUSSION ACTION PLAN

## WHEN IN DOUBT—SIT THEM OUT!



Presence of even one of the following signs & symptoms may suggest a concussion:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Blurry Vision
- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Sensitive to light or sound
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty with balance
- General confusion
- Difficulty orienting to time and place
- Not feeling like themselves

Red Flag Signs & Symptoms include:

- Blocked airway / Not breathing
- Poor circulation
- Loss of consciousness
- Headaches that worsen
- Seizure or convulsion
- Memory loss
- Looks drowsy
- Cannot be awoke normally
- Repeated vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Increased confusion; unusual behavior change; irritability
- Weakness, tingling or numbness in arms or legs
- Neck pain
- Double vision

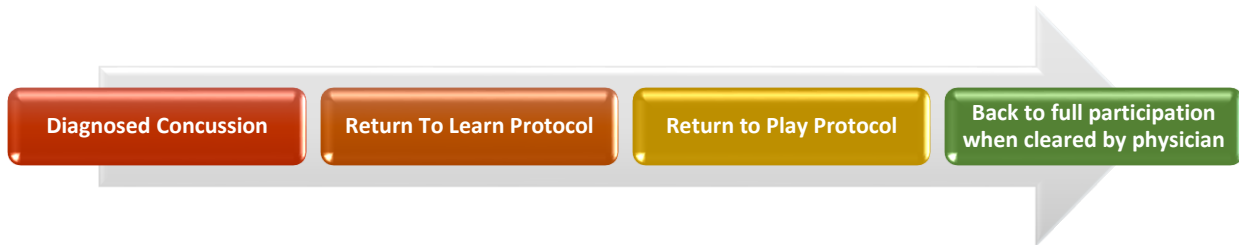
If no Red Flags are present:

- Continue to monitor for red flags for 48 hours
- DO NOT give any pain-relieving medication as this could mask the symptoms resulting in the athlete not being fully aware of the severity of the injury
- Inform the caregiver (e.g. parent, guardian, spouse) and educate them with this protocol
- Have player assessed by a physician within 48 hours

- DO NOT move the athlete
- DO NOT remove any clothing or equipment
- DO NOT give any medication, food or beverages

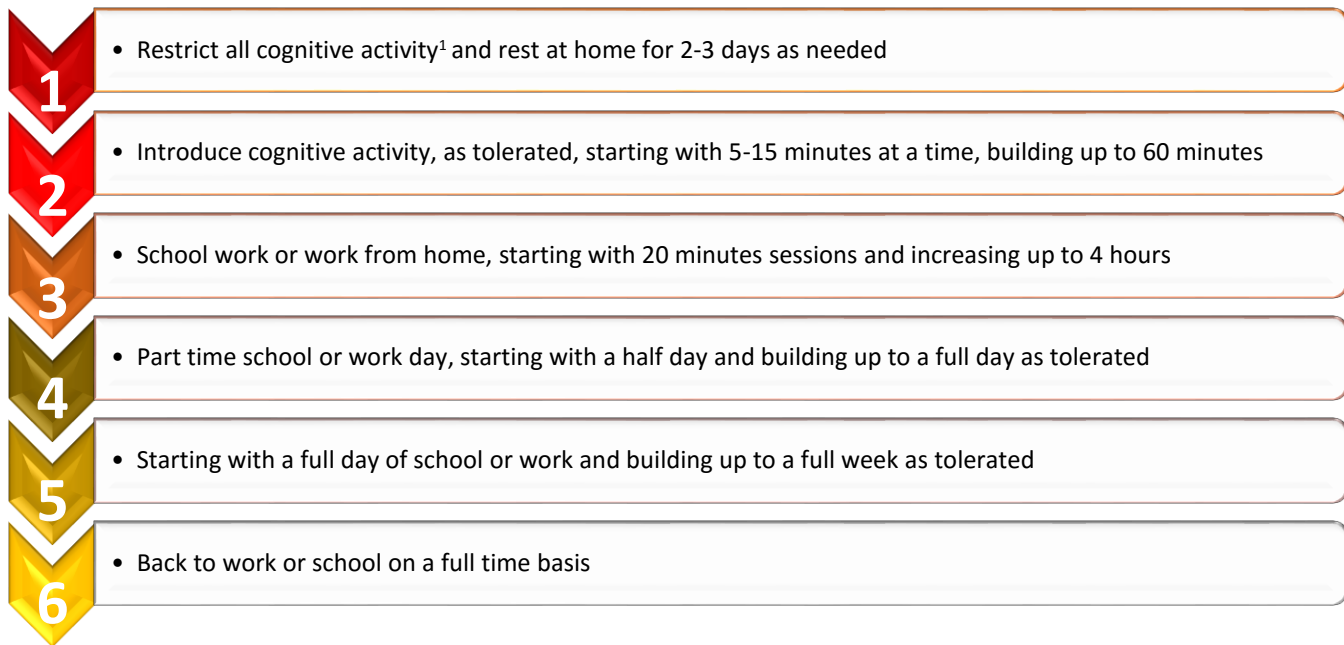
**MEMORY FUNCTION QUESTIONS THAT COULD BE ASKED AFTER A FALL TO TEST FOR COGNITIVE RECOGNITION:**

- “What venue are we at today?”
  - “What day is it today?”
- “Who were you last practicing with or playing against?”
  - “What school do you go to?”
- “How did you get to darts today?”
- “What did you have for supper last night?”



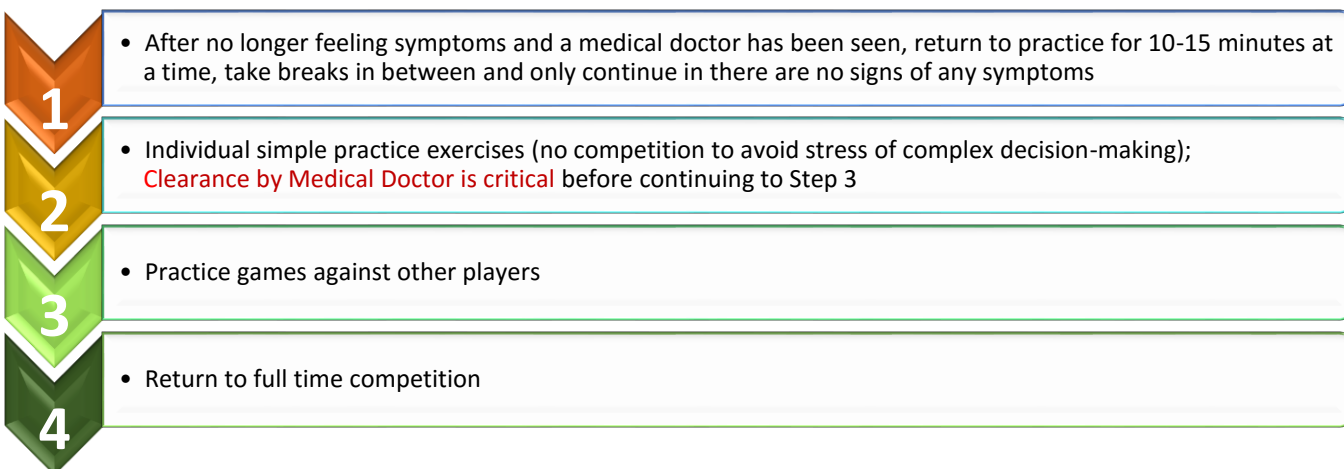
## RETURN TO LEARN PROTOCOL

The following protocol should be guided by a healthcare practitioner with the support of the player's caregiver or partner (e.g. parent/guardian/spouse), teacher, employer, etc.



## RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

A player must be symptom-free for 24 hours after completing each step before moving to the next one. If any symptoms of concussion come back, either with activity or later that day, the player must stop the activity immediately, rest until symptoms resolve (minimum of 24 hours), and start again from the previous step. Return to play will be individual to the player and their injury.



<sup>1</sup> Examples of cognitive activity are work, school assignments and tests, reading, texting, video games, computers, televisions and high level conversations. In the sport of darts, this cognitive activity could include the concentration required of hand and coordination and mathematics—including even simple combinations of out-shots and strategies.

## REFERENCES

The referenced statistics are courtesy of the Alberta Concussion Alliance—a group of professions in Alberta who have come together to provide a set of documents and tools for the prevention and safe recovery of all concussions. Partners in the development of these tools include the Sport Medicine Council of Alberta and the Brain Care Centre.

This policy, the Concussion Action Plan and protocols were developed from the templates available from the Alberta Concussion Alliance and customized for the sport of darts.

Alberta Concussion Alliance—<http://www.sportmedab.ca/alberta-concussion-alliance>

Sport Medicine Council of Alberta—<http://www.sportmedab.ca/>

Brain Care Centre—<http://www.braincarecentre.com/>; <https://www.facebook.com/BrainCareC>

Sport Concussion Assessment Tool—3rd edition – <http://bjsm.bmj.com/content/47/5/259.full.pdf>