

4/12/2018

# TKDNS 14.0

Concussions



Approved: April 12, 2018

## 14.0 – Concussions

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. Taekwondo Nova Scotia takes athlete safety as a primary responsibility and the following policy defines the process for identifying and managing suspected or confirmed concussions.

### 2. Definitions

The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

- 2.1. “Association” – Taekwondo Nova Scotia.
- 2.2. “Athlete” – any athlete, student or participant, engaged in the practice of Taekwondo regardless of rank, experience and level of training.
- 2.3. “Coach” – can mean Coach, Instructor, Master, or any other person in a position of authority within the Dojang or Taekwondo training environment.
- 2.4. “Days” – For the purposes of this Policy “days” refers to business days, not including holidays and weekends.
- 2.5. “Individuals” – All categories of membership defined in the Association’s Bylaws, including Affiliated clubs, teams, as well as all individuals engaged in activities with the Association including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, referees, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, and directors and officers of the Association.
- 2.6. “In writing”- A letter, fax or email sent directly to or from the Association.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all Members, Individuals and Affiliated Clubs of the Taekwondo Nova Scotia whether they are engaged in Taekwondo activities or not and is in effect whether an athlete receives an injury, concussion or brain damage while participating in Taekwondo or any other activity. This policy must be always considered in effect.

### 4. Overview and Background

- 4.1. A brain injury or concussion could happen because of various altercations or events such as a kick or strike to the head, jaw or upper body or a fall which is significant enough to cause the brain to shake inside the skull.
- 4.2. This trauma could cause symptoms of concussion and unbeknownst to most coaches and referees, there could be some measure of brain injury suffered. Most referees and coaches do not have the experience or medical expertise to recognize such an injury.
- 4.3. It must be acknowledged that a person in such a state could appear to the normal observer to be “out of it, punch drunk or dazed”. Symptoms include but are not limited to headaches, loss of consciousness, irritability, slow reaction time, drowsiness, slurred speech, double vision and vomiting.
- 4.4. Even when diagnosed by a physician via a diagnostic imaging test, CAT scan or MRI, a concussion may not be evident and despite “normal” visual diagnostics, this does not preclude the possibility of a severe concussion and said physician may suggest being “safe rather than sorry”.
- 4.5. When seen by a physician a skull fracture, bleeding in the brain or indeed some swelling may not be evident but may indeed be present.
- 4.6. An injury could be present and could be temporary or permanent or perhaps a blood clot may be present and could be fatal.

## 14.0 – Concussions

### 5. Application of this Policy

- 5.1. Taekwondo Nova Scotia has adopted a “better safe than sorry” policy when it comes to concussions.
- 5.2. Every athlete will be treated as if they have suffered a concussion when it comes to posing the question “I wonder if he/she has a concussion?”
- 5.3. A visit to the doctor or the emergency room is the only option to get a definitive answer to this question.
- 5.4. Taekwondo Nova Scotia believes that the health and safety of the athletes in Taekwondo is more important than anything else and as such, the MTU demands that every precaution be taken before an athlete who has suffered a suspected or identified head injury returns to practice or competitive situation.

### 6. Application of this Policy

- 6.1. An athlete or student suspected of a concussion must stop play, training or competition immediately.
  - 6.1.1. Any athlete who receives head contact which results and a standing 8 count during a match that athlete is required to see tournament medical staff immediately following the match and will need to be cleared from the possible symptoms of a concussion before participating in the next match.
- 6.2. Whether this happens in the Dojang, at a tournament, training camp or outside of Taekwondo activities or practice, the coach must remove the player from participation immediately and instruct the parents that they refer the athlete immediately to a physician or the Emergency Room for diagnosis.
- 6.3. The decision of the Coach or Master Instructor is final and parents, or the athlete of the age of majority, must follow up as instructed.
- 6.4. Once instructed by the coach that an athlete visits a doctor because of concussion-like symptoms, the athlete will not be allowed to return to training or competition until he/she has been treated, and a note provided, by a medical physician.
- 6.5. An athlete diagnosed as concussed by a medical physician must stop all Taekwondo activities immediately regardless of severity of the injury. This decision is solely the responsibility of the Coach. The injury must be reported to Taekwondo Nova Scotia.
- 6.6. All coaches, Affiliate Club Owners and Master Instructors registered with Taekwondo Nova Scotia cannot allow any athlete diagnosed as concussed to return to training or competition without written permission from a physician. The athlete will follow the Return-to-Play guidelines listed below. This permission need not be the physician who diagnosed the concussion but must be aware of the concussion.
- 6.7. Such written approval must be submitted to the Coach, who will inform Taekwondo Nova Scotia. A copy of the written permission will be submitted to the Board Secretary to keep on file.
- 6.8. Similar permission must be granted by a physician that the Return-to-Training guidelines have been followed, as listed below, before said athlete assessed with a concussion is permitted to return to any form of Taekwondo activity.
- 6.9. TKDNS is adamant that the responsibility for the enforcement of this policy is that of the Coach or Master Instructor and ultimately the Board of TKDNS.

## 14.0 – Concussions

### 7. Return to training framework

- 7.1. The return-to-training process is gradual and begins after a doctor has given the athlete clearance to return to activity.
- 7.2. Steps 1 through 4 must be completed with consultation between the parent/guardian and the Coach.
- 7.3. Prior to Step 1 and Step 5 a doctor's clearance must be submitted to the coach and TKDNS
- 7.4. **Note: The athlete may only progress to the next step after 24 hours of no symptoms after completion of the previous step.**
- 7.5. **Step 1:** No activity, only complete rest. Proceed to step 2 only when symptoms are gone.
- 7.6. **Step 2:** Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling. Monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training, weightlifting, body contact or bouncing.
- 7.7. **Step 3:** Sparring drills and aerobic training with only light bouncing and no body contact.
- 7.8. **Step 4:** Drills without body contact. The time needed to progress from non-contact to contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and the player. Go to step 5 ONLY after medical clearance. See above regarding notification at this point.
- 7.9. **Step 5:** Begin drills with body contact after medical clearance.
- 7.10. **Step 6:** Return to full training and competition.
- 7.11. **If symptoms or signs return, the player must return to the previous step and be re-evaluated by a physician.**

### 8. Failure to follow this policy

- 8.1. Failure of any Coach, Master Instructor, athlete, trainer or Director to follow this policy and the guidelines herein will result in indefinite suspension pending a full investigation by Taekwondo Nova Scotia.