



BOW VALLEY HOCKEY SOCIETY



FIT TO PLAY POLICY

Bow Valley Hockey Society (BVHS) wants to reduce injuries by minimizing the occurrences of players participating in games or practices when they are not fit to play due to illness, injury and specifically concussions. In an ideal world, every minor hockey team would have a qualified trainer or another medical practitioner who has been trained to assess players and make determinations when it is unsafe for them to play. This is not currently feasible in minor hockey. As a result, BVHS is empowering its coaches to make determinations using their best judgment as to whether a player is allowed to play or practice. This policy sets out the practical steps for coaches to follow in applying this policy.

ILLNESS

If before or during a game or practice, a player is noticed by a coach to appear to be suffering from an illness, more severe than a common cold, the coach should first talk to the player and a parent of that player to determine the nature of the illness. If the coach believes that the condition could put the player or other players at an increased risk of illness, the coach has the authority and should declare the player unfit to play and the player shall then not participate, or continue to participate, in the practice or game. The parent and player must accept the determination of the coach for the immediate game or practice. However, if the condition persists and if the parent disagrees that the player is unfit to play, they can obtain a note from a medical doctor that confirms the player is “cleared for gameplay”.

INJURY (NON-CONCUSSION)

If before or during a game or practice, a player is noticed by a coach to appear to be suffering from an injury, other than an injury with suspected concussion signs or symptoms, the coach should first talk to the player and a parent of that player to determine the nature of the injury. If the coach believes that the condition could put the player at an increased risk of further injury, or if the ability of the player to play normally is noticeably diminished, the coach has the authority and should declare the player unfit to play, and the player shall then not participate, or continue to participate, in the practice or game. The parent and player must accept the determination of the coach for the immediate game or practice.

However, if the condition persists and if the parent disagrees that the player is unfit to play, they can obtain a note from a medical doctor that confirms the player has been seen for the injury in question and is “cleared for gameplay that may include body contact”. As accidental contact occurs at the lower levels, this is a requirement for all age groups.

INJURY (CONCUSSION)

Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PLAY, urgently assessed medically, should not be left alone and should not drive a motor vehicle. Concussion should be suspected in the presence of the following symptoms: headache, physical signs (such as unsteadiness), impaired brain function (e.g., confusion) or abnormal behaviour. Headache sensitivity to noise, drowsiness, “pressure in the head”, feeling slowed down, trouble falling asleep (if applicable) neck pain feeling like “in a fog”, more emotional, nausea/vomiting, “don’t feel right”, irritability, dizziness, difficulty concentrating, sadness, blurred vision, difficulty remembering, nervous/anxious, balance problems, fatigue, low energy or sensitive to light.



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Policy

If before or during a game or practice, a player is noticed by a coach to appear to be suffering from suspected concussion signs or symptoms, the coach should first talk to the player and a parent of that player to determine the nature of the injury. If the coach believes that the condition could be the result of a concussion, the coach has the authority and should declare the player unfit to play and the player shall then not participate, or continue to participate, in the practice or game. The parent and player must accept the determination of the coach for the immediate game or practice. A player declared unfit to play for a suspected concussion, shall not return to the ice without a note from a medical doctor, stating either that the player does not have a concussion, or that the player has recovered from the concussion and is “cleared for gameplay that may include body contact”. As accidental contact occurs at the lower levels, this is a requirement for all age groups. This policy is being put in place to empower coaches to make decisions as to whether a player is fit to play hockey. BVHS understands that in exercising this discretion coaches are not medically trained to properly assess illnesses, injuries, or concussions. While we understand that inconvenience will occur, we have decided that we would rather inconvenience some families, than allow one player to play when they should not have, due to injury.