



The United States Blind Golf Association (USBGA) recognizes that participation in any sport or physical activity has some inherent risk of head impact or a concussion. The USBGA takes the health and safety of people playing or participating in our events seriously and recognizes that concussions are a significant public health risk.

## Purpose and Scope

This protocol provides information for Players, Coaches and Volunteers participating in USBGA sponsored events, the appropriate processes to recognize the symptoms of concussions and how to respond accordingly. The USBGA strives to ensure that all participants of USBGA-sponsored events receive appropriate care and timely information following an impact to the head which may result in a concussion. The advice of medical professionals and their direct care, if provided, supersedes this protocol.

## Definitions

The following terms and definitions are provided for clarity.

- a. "Concussion" is a brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions.
- b. "Concussion Symptoms" can be physical, cognitive, emotional/behavioral and/or sleep related as more particularly set out in the current **USBGA Concussion Recognition Tool**.
- c. "Event" refers to a USBGA-sponsored or sanctioned event, including golf competitions.
- d. "USBGA Representative" refers the Tournament Director hosting the USBGA-sponsored event.
- e. "Participant" refers a person(s) who are actively involved in a USBGA-sponsored event including players, coaches or volunteers designated by USBGA or the golf course to assist in the event.
- f. "Player" refers to a person who is registered and participating in an event.
- g. "Policy" refers to this **USBGA Concussion Protocol** and related protocols
- h. "Suspected Concussion" refers to a person who appears to have either experienced an injury or impact that may result in a concussion or is exhibiting symptoms that may be the result of a concussion.

## Concussion Prevention

The risk of concussions occurring can be reduced by the proper implementation of prevention strategies:

- a. Concussion awareness and education: The USBGA will make concussion awareness resources available on our website, including this protocol.
- b. Safe participation environment: USBGA sponsored event and activity venues will be properly prepared and free of hazards.
- c. Fair play and respect for opponents: Ethical values should be encouraged in all activities.

## Concussion Recognition and Management Procedures

This USBGA concussion protocol will be implemented at USBGA sponsored events. Any case of a concussion or a suspected concussion will be reported to the USBGA Tournament Director or Event Representative to ensure prompt and careful response to the person(s) who may be concussed.



### Signs Observed by Parents, Guardians, Coaches, Players or Volunteers:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about events
- Answers questions slowly
- Repeats questions
- Can't recall events prior to the hit, bump, or fall
- Can't recall events after the hit, bump, or fall
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Forgets event schedule or assignments

### Signs/Symptoms Observed or Experienced by Participant After Injury Occurred:

#### Thinking/Remembering

- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Feeling more slowed down
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy

#### Physical

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Fatigue or feeling tired
- Blurry or double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Numbness or tingling
- Does not "feel right"

#### Emotional

- Irritable
- Sad
- More emotional than usual
- Nervous Sleep
- Drowsy
- Sleeps less than usual
- Sleeps more than usual
- Has trouble falling asleep

### Guidelines for an affected person

In accordance with the **USBGA Concussion Protocol**, if during any USBGA sponsored event, a participant exhibiting signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with concussion, he/she must be immediately removed from participation. The participant may only return to physical activity if/when he/she is evaluated by a licensed health



care provider trained in the evaluation and management of sports concussion and receives a written clearance to return.

### CDC Guidelines for Returning to Activities

The CDC's concussion protocol details a gradual timeline for return to normal activities, school and athletics. Progress is monitored at every stage, with healthcare providers clearing patients for more activity once they're certain it's safe. For athletes, the protocol can be broken into six stages, following an initial rest period of 28 to 72 hours.

- **Rest and return to limited activity:** Ensuring adequate rest and avoiding exertion is the first stage. Once you're clear to return to school or work, screen time should be limited. The aim is to return to physical activities that aren't risky, such as short, 10-minute walks.
- **Light aerobic exercise:** Once light activity is reincorporated and symptoms subside further, the aim is to do exercise to boost heart rate. This might mean walking, swimming, or using a stationary bicycle for 20 minutes at 70% of your maximum heart rate.
- **Sport specific exercise:** Gradually, exercises associated with the specific sport are reintroduced. This might mean noncontact activities like running sprints or doing skating drills.
- **Noncontact drills:** Once it's safe to do so, athletes begin to engage in more strenuous drills and start strengthening and resistance training.
- **Full-contact practice:** Before being allowed to return to competition, with the healthcare provider's clearance, the athlete takes part in full-contact training and practice and is carefully monitored after each practice.
- **Return to play:** If there are no symptoms or issues following practice and a final evaluation, the athlete is cleared for competition.



## Concussion Protocol

If, following a head impact, a Player, Coach, Volunteer or Participant is:

1. **Unconscious, the United States Blind Golf Association (USBGA) Tournament Director or Event Representative will:**
  - a. Call 911 for emergency medical assistance and contact any medical personnel available on site.
  - b. Stay with the individual until medical services arrive.
  - c. Try to ensure that the individual is not moved, other than as required for airway support or if there is imminent danger.
  - d. Monitor and document any physical, emotional and/or cognitive changes.
  - e. Attempt to contact the designated primary emergency contact to inform them that emergency medical services have been contacted to assist the individual and the current location and status of those emergency services.
  
2. **Conscious following a period of unconsciousness, however short, or has not lost consciousness, the United States Blind Golf Association (USBGA) Tournament Director or Event Representative will, if medical personnel are not available on site:**
  - a. Attempt to determine if any red flags or symptoms of a Concussion or Suspected Concussion (as set out in the current **Concussion Recognition Tool**) exists and, if so, recommend a call for medical assistance or seek medical assessment at the earliest opportunity.
  - b. If, considering the provisions of the current **Concussion Recognition Tool**, the individual does not present any signs of a Concussion or Suspected Concussion, the player may resume play. The United States Blind Golf Association (USBGA) Tournament Director or Event Representative shall take steps to monitor the player during the resumption of play.
  
3. **In appropriate cases where signs of a Concussion or Suspected Concussion may appear, a medical assessment shall take place as soon as possible.**
  - a. If the individual does not co-operate in evaluating the possibility of a Concussion or displays Concussion Symptoms and refuses medical assistance or assessment, it will be recommended that the individual leave the playing area and rest in a dark quiet area.
  - b. The United States Blind Golf Association (USBGA) Tournament Director or Event Representative will attempt to notify the designated primary emergency contact and advise of the individual's current status and arrange for or confirm that the individual has a ride home.

**Note:** If the individual with a suspected concussion refuses emergency medical assistance, or having received such assistance, refuses to follow the advice provided by emergency or medical personnel, the United States Blind Golf Association (USBGA) reserves the right and discretion to withdraw the player's entry from the competition, or the individual's further participation in the event.



### Incident Reporting

If the Tournament Director is not involved in the initial discovery of a suspected concussion, The United States Blind Golf Association (USBGA) Event Representative who initiated and completed the detailed Incident Report will forward the report to the Tournament Director at the completion of the day's competition.

### Communication

The Tournament Director shall, where possible, contact the individual (or the parent or guardian if a minor) within 10 days following the incident to inquire as to the status of the individual and to determine whether or not medical attention or assessment has resulted.

### Policy Review

United States Blind Golf Association (USBGA) will review this policy on an annual basis.

### Additional Resources

The following resources are intended to be used to supplement this protocol but are not intended to embody the official protocol for the USBGA.

- CDC – [Returning to Sports | HEADS UP | CDC](#)
- American Brain Foundation - [Concussion Symptoms and Treatment | American Brain Foundation](#)
- [Current Concussion Recognition Tool](#)

**Note:** Thank you to Golf Canada for their support in developing the USBGA's concussion protocol, utilizing Golf Canada's concussion protocol as a reference.