



## Cedar Island Yacht Club

### Concussion Policy

## Scope

**Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety)**, 2018 makes it mandatory for sports organizations to: ensure that athletes under 26 years of age,\* parents of athletes under 18, coaches, team trainers and officials confirm every year that they have reviewed Ontario's Concussion Awareness Resources.

This policy will be enforced for all CIYC official activities. The policy applies to all team members, program participants, staff and volunteers of all ages.

## Protocol

CIYC is focused on ensuring the wellbeing and safety of all participants, members, volunteers and staff. We recognize the potential severity of a head injury and the commitment and intent behind research to manage concussions. We are committed to educating those involved with CIYC, creating awareness to help prevent injuries and appropriately managing any suspected concussions and diagnosed concussions.

**CIYC's Concussion Policy** is committed to the following actions in regards to concussions:

1. Committed to increasing awareness regarding what concussions are and the potential for serious complications.
2. Enforcing procedures and training that promotes preventative actions to help reduce the number of concussions.
3. Providing procedures that support CIYC staff, volunteers and athletes in ensuring quick recognition and removal of any individual with a suspected concussion from CIYC activities.
4. Ensure that following a suspected concussion there are clear steps for both the individual and CIYC to follow before a return to sport occurs to ensure the focus is on the individual's long-term health.

Note this protocol and associated procedures, complements CIYC's comprehensive emergency procedures.

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## Operational Procedures

### Concussion Education and Prevention

CIYC will conduct annual training for all members who lead programs or coach teams. This educational session will include up to date information on what concussions are, how to recognize potential concussions and best practices on concussion prevention in sailing. Training will also include the contents of this concussion policy including their roles and responsibilities in recognizing and removing athletes/participants who are involved in a situation that potentially could result in a concussion or have a concussion. Additionally, staff will be trained on the education components for participants and parents, and the related information in our Code of Conduct

Officials will be trained in concussion education as part of their ongoing training.

Concussion education resources will be made available to help build awareness among CIYC participants (and their parents/guardians in cases of minors). During training instructors will remind participants of the need to take care around the boom and masts as well as while moving and setting up boats, also ensuring everything is working properly. Ongoing reminders

for participants to be aware of potential situations where head injuries could occur will help build awareness and prevention related to concussions.

CIYC members who engage in dangerous or reckless behaviour that could potentially create a high risk for a concussion causing situation will be subject to disciplinary actions as described in the Code of Conduct.

### Recognition, Removal and Referral – Programs and Practices

If any individual suffers any kind of injury where there is potential for there to have been direct or indirect force to the head, neck or face, and is experiencing or demonstrating any concussion related signs or symptoms, the individual will be removed from activity immediately and rest. The member or staff in charge of the program or practice will err on the side of caution in their decision making.

CIYC members or staff recognize that symptoms may not appear immediately and that concussions can occur in many different situations. In the case of a suspected concussion, the individual may not be in a condition to assess themselves or make appropriate decisions.

For individuals under 18, all suspected concussions or situations that occurred that potentially could result in a concussion will be reported to the guardian. The guardian should monitor the individual for delayed signs and symptoms for the next 72 hours.

All individuals of any age with a suspected concussion will be referred to a medical doctor (or nurse practitioner) for medical assessment and diagnosis.

If a direct force to the head results in immediate injury or any “red flag” signs and symptoms of a concussion, CIYC's Emergency Action Plan will immediately be followed.

(More information on signs and symptoms of a concussion as well as appropriate response needed for various signs can be found in the concussion resources provided to coaches, instructors, parents and athletes and available within the Ontario Sailing Emergency Procedures as well as Appendix A of this policy).

### Recognition, Removal and Referral – Competition

In addition to the procedures during a practice or program, the following also will be enforced during competition. Under CIYC's Concussion Policy, all members recognize the authority of their on-site coach. In a potential concussion situation, our policy ensures the athlete agrees to waive their rights to the Racing Rules of Sailing - Decision to Race Rule (Decision to Race Rule states - the responsibility for a boat's decision to participate in a race or to continue racing is theirs alone). The coach in attendance at the competition will make the decision for their athlete if they can continue based on a direct or indirect hit to the head.

In competition, coaches, officials and athletes all have a responsibility to communicate openly and honestly about situations where direct or indirect hits to a head occur. If a situation occurs where a concussion is possible, the member or coach will communicate with the athlete, officials and parents/guardian as appropriate. Officials will communicate with the athlete's skipper or coach if any incident happens on the water away from the skipper or coach.

All individuals of any age with a suspected concussion will be removed and referred to a medical doctor (or nurse practitioner) for medical assessment and diagnosis.

If the direct force to the head results in immediate injury or signs of a concussion, CIYC's Emergency Procedures in partnership with the facility's location specific Emergency Action Plan will immediately be followed.

### Reporting

As per CIYC's Emergency Procedures, any incident resulting in injury or removal from activity will be reported on an CIYC Incident Report Form. These are to be submitted (electronic images

acceptable) to the appropriate officer Health and Safety Coordinator and Commodore within 24 hours.

The Health and Safety Coordinator or designate, tracks all incident reports for patterns and trends as well as individual situations.

### Participant Disclosure

If an individual discloses, or staff/volunteers become aware through any means, that an individual suffered a possible concussion through other activities they will be unable to participate in CIYC activities. Discovery or disclosure of a suspected concussion will be reported to CIYC's Health and Safety Coordinator within 24 hours, following procedures for incident reporting.

Members who fail to disclose a possible concussion as described in their Code of Conduct may be subject to discipline as described in the Code of Conduct.

### Returning to Sailing

Each individual will have their own individualized and medically supervised Return to Sport protocol. The plan is a graduated strategy to ensure the long-term health of the individual. CIYC is committed to supporting the individual in their recovery.

Before a participant or athlete is permitted to return to any CIYC led practice or program after experiencing a concussion, or having reported a concussion, they will need to submit proof of medical clearance that permits them to return to participating in a full range of physical activities.

The written clearance must be provided by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner and submitted to the coach or instructor who will forward to the Health and Safety Coordinator. The clearance will be filed CIYC's original copy of the incident report or athlete disclosure.

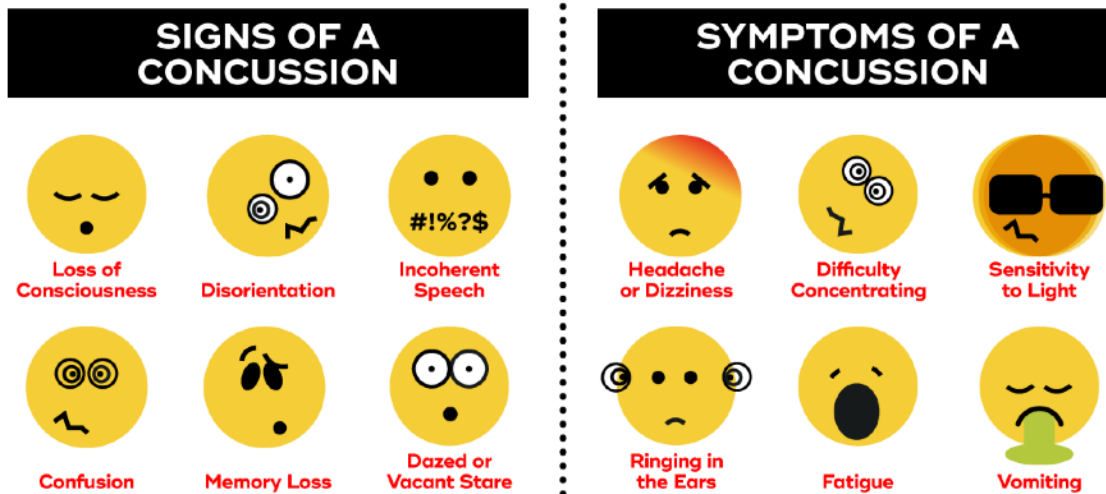
Due to the unpredictability of sailing, they can rejoin activities on the water once they have medical clearance to return to normal sailing activities (Step 5 of the Standard Return to Sport Strategy as found in Appendix B).

Once cleared, coaches and instructors will gradually build the activity level to help progress the individual slowly. This will include ensuring the first time on the water is in mild weather conditions with an uncomplicated course. After a few successful on the water outings they will gradually be permitted to experience more extreme weather conditions and increased complications in the sailing course laid out for them.

Competition (Stage 6) will only be permitted once they have demonstrated symptom free completion of a minimum of two on the water training experiences involving a mix of conditions.

(The time required to complete this may depend on the weather conditions occurring in the location. The coach/instructor will work with the individual focusing on an individualized progression with the individual's long-term health as the priority.)

## Appendix A – Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion



Many people who sustain a **concussion** have no observable signs, which can make diagnosis difficult. Recognising the condition often depends on the affected person reporting the symptoms they are experiencing. These can occur either immediately after the head injury or minutes to hours later.

These are the signs and symptoms of concussion:

### Signs of Concussion

Doctors look for the following signs in someone suspected of suffering from concussion:

- Confusion and inability to speak coherently
- Disorientation (e.g. unaware of time and place)
- Lack of co-ordination (e.g. stumbling, inability to walk in a straight line)
- Loss of memory (e.g. about the causative event)
- Slurred speech
- Delayed response to questions
- Appearing dazed or with a vacant stare
- Inappropriate emotion (e.g. crying for no reason)
- Any temporary loss of consciousness

### Symptoms of Concussion

People who have sustained a concussion may also report the following symptoms:

- Headache or a feeling of pressure in the head
- Confusion or difficulty concentrating
- Dizziness
- Changes in vision (e.g. 'seeing stars')
- Ringing in the ears
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fatigue
- Sensitivity to light
- Loss of smell or taste

## Appendix B - Return to Sport Protocol

A CONCUSSION is a serious event, but you can recover fully from such an injury if the brain is given enough time to rest and recuperate. Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, is a stage-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution.

Each stage must take a **minimum of one day** but could last longer, depending on the athlete and their specific situation.

If symptoms reappear at any stage, go back to the previous stage until symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

### **STAGE 1: Symptom limited activity – Goal: A gradual reintroduction of activity**

After an initial short period of rest of 24-48 hours, light cognitive and physical activity can be initiated as long as they don't worsen symptoms. A physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning a step-wise return to learn and sport strategy.

### **STAGE 2: Light aerobic exercise – Goal: Increased heart rate**

Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. The athlete should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** Proceed to Step 3 after 24 hours.

### **STAGE 3: Sport specific activities – Goal: Add movement**

Activities such as pool swimming or throwing can begin at step 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high speed stops or hitting a baseball with a bat.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** Proceed to Step 4 after 24 hours.

### **STAGE 4: Begin Drills without body contact – Goal: Exercise, coordination, and increased thinking**

Activities such as knot tying, boat rigging and resistance training can be added to activities from previous stages.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** The time needed to progress will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the athlete. Proceed to Step 5 only after medical clearance.

### **STAGE 5: On water practice, once cleared by a doctor – Goal: Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff**

Coaches and instructors will allow return to the water in gradually challenging conditions.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** Proceed to Step 6 after minimum of two on water situations without symptoms.

### **STAGE 6: Competition**

Return to sport with normal activities

*Approved by The Membership  
October 24, 2020*