

ROWAN'S LAW

UPDATE ON RETURN TO SPORT

THE RULES FOR REMOVAL-FROM-SPORT AND RETURN-TO-SPORT PROTOCOLS
ARE EXPECTED TO BE IN PLACE BY JANUARY 1, 2021.

Rowan's Law was named for Rowan Stringer.

She was a high school rugby player from Ottawa, who died in the spring of 2013 from a condition known as second impact syndrome (swelling of the brain caused by a subsequent injury that occurred before a previous injury healed). Rowan is believed to have experienced three concussions over six days while playing rugby. She had a concussion but didn't know her brain needed time to heal. Neither did her parents, teachers or coaches.



What is Rowan's Law?

Rowan's law is a concussion awareness program that was mandated by the Ontario Government.

Step One:

The rules requiring the review of Concussion Awareness Resources and Concussion Codes of Conduct came into effect on July 1, 2019.

Background:

Bill 193, Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety) 2018, imposes various requirements on sports organizations in Ontario, to ensure greater awareness of concussion risks and necessary protocols among sports participants, parents, guardians, teachers, coaches and operators.

All sport organization were required to have a policy in place, which meant that last fall all ski resorts developed their policies and procedures and activated them during the 2019/20 season.

Step Two:

The rules for removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols are expected to be in place by January 1, 2021.



Requirements for Sport Organizations

As per the Ontario Government

1. 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
2. Establish a Concussion Code of Conduct that sets out rules of behaviour to support concussion prevention
3. Establish a Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport protocol

What does this really mean?

A concussion can only be diagnosed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

Concussions can be caused by a direct blow to the head, face or neck or by a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull.

Concussions can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness. Injuries from concussions may lead to “second impact syndrome”. This is a rare condition that causes rapid and severe brain swelling and often catastrophic results, when an athlete suffers a second concussion before s/he is free of symptoms sustained from the first concussion. (This is what happened in the case of Rowan Stringer.

The result?

Most of us are not in a position to identify a concussion or to address when a participant is cleared to return to sport.



How did we implement the program?

1st We established a club policy:

This policy has been put in place to communicate XYZ Ski Club's expectations and guidelines since the health and well-being of our program participants/athletes is of our paramount concern.

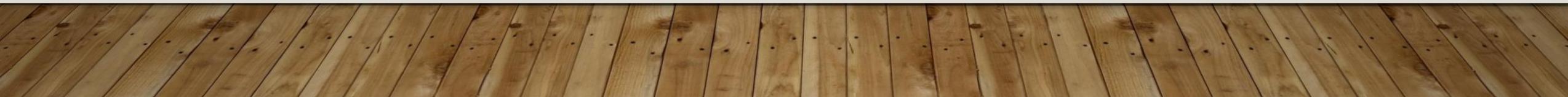
2nd We developed a concussion awareness program: Education on concussion awareness was added as an additional step to the registration process and a confirmation of their reading was a required action to move into program registration.

3rd We identified responsibilities

Parent or Guardian Responsibilities:

If an athlete/student has sustained a head injury and has been examined by Ski Patrol but not sent for further medical attention the Parent/Guardian must be provided with a **Head Injury Caution Form** and the responding ski patroller must inform the program administrative staff, program head or Program Manager.

If further medical attention is required, the athlete should be examined by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner as soon as possible that day.



Athlete/Participant Responsibility:

Athlete/Participants must immediately inform their instructor/coach/supervisor of any signs or symptoms of a concussion and remove themselves from the program/training.

Athlete/Participants who witness other athletes/participants with signs or symptoms of a concussion must encourage them to remove themselves from play and inform the instructor/coach/supervisor.

Coaches/Pros and on hill staff; (race crew and ski patrol, lift operations)

The on hill staff working with athlete/participants were educated on concussion awareness through our on-line training.

4th We developed a process for documentation and removal from sport:

If an athlete has a confirmed concussion, they will be unable to participate in programs until medical clearance permits them to “Return to Sport” and must provide a Doctor’s Clearance Letter to the program’s administration, program head or Alpine Program Manager.



HEAD INJURY CAUTION FORM

Any head injury should be treated seriously. Occasionally, serious, unexpected and life-threatening internal bleeding may develop in the next 24 to 48-hour period.

Due to this, careful observation over this period is advised. This involves waking the patient every two hours for the 24-hour period following the incident and advising his/her physician immediately if any of the following develop:

1. Abnormal drowsiness
2. Persistent vomiting or nausea
3. Confusion as to time, place and name
4. Severe headache
5. Abnormal twitching of limbs
6. Squinting, crossed eyes or double vision
7. Dripping fluid from nose or ears
8. Weakness of an arm, or dragging of a foot or leg
9. Stiff Neck

Immediately contact an EMERGENCY ROOM or PHYSICIAN if worried in any way about the patient's condition.

HEAD INJURY CAUTION FORM

Date: _____ Time: _____
mm/dd/yy hh/mm (24 hr)

I have read and understand the above instructions on head injuries.

Patient, Parent or Guardian Name (print)

Signature

Patroller Name (print)

#

Signature



MEDICAL ASSESSMENT LETTER

Date: _____

Athlete's Name: _____

To Whom it may concern,

Athletes who sustain a suspected concussion should be managed according to the Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport. Accordingly, I have personally completed a Medical Assessment on this patient.

Result of Medical Assessment

This patient has not been diagnosed with a concussion and can resume full participation in school, work, and sport activities without restriction.

This patient has not been diagnosed with a concussion but the assessment led to the following diagnosis and recommendations:

This patient has been diagnosed with a concussion.

The goal of concussion management is to allow complete recovery of the patients' concussion by promoting a safe and gradual return to school and sport activities. The patient has been instructed to avoid all recreational and organized sports or activities that could potentially place them at risk of another concussion or head injury. Starting on _____ (date), I would ask that the patient be allowed to participate in school and low-risk physical activities as tolerated and only at a level that does not bring on or worsen their concussion symptoms.

Other comments:

Thank-you in advance for your understanding.

Yours Sincerely,

Signature/print _____ M.D./N.P.
(circle appropriate designation)



The result?

Things we learned:

Because this was a province wide initiative many of our members/guests were already aware of the new process, some brought us return to sport clearance letters from school or other sport organizations for incidents we weren't even aware of.

We scanned and filed all returned paperwork.

Working closely with the ski patrol enabled us to have a streamlined process that was respected and implemented by those who were asked to follow our policies.

Challenges:

It is difficult for young coaches and pros to make a decision about an athlete. We encouraged all head incidents to be reported to supervisors and parents where the decision was grey. If patrol was called it was cut and dry.

