

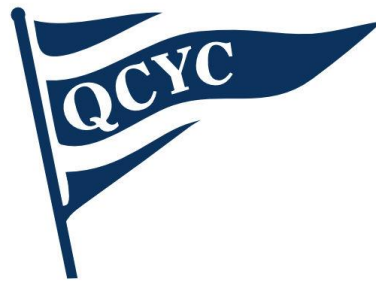


SBSC



Understanding Rowan's Law A Guide to Concussions 2025

Bluffers Basin Race Management Committee



Protect Your Noggin

Concussions For Dummies

AKA Ontario's Rowan's Law

April 21, 2025

Many Thanks to:

Graham Dougall, NRO, RMCC, CJ

Agenda

- Why this session?
- What is a concussion?
- How to recognize a potential concussion?
- How to recover?
- The legal stuff AKA Rowan's Law
- Readiness and Preparedness
- Resources
- Wrap-up

Why this session?

- Protect your crew and ourselves from the long term adverse impact of concussions, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE).
- Help ensure that all Bluffers Basin Clubs and its sports participants are compliant with Government of [Ontario's Rowan's Law \(Concussion Safety\), 2018, S.O. 2018, c. 1 - Bill 193](#) and its [Regulation](#)

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

Acquired brain injury (ABI) refers to **any type of brain damage that occurs after birth**. It can include damage sustained by infection, disease, lack of oxygen or a blow to the head. Two thirds of all people with an ABI who have their activity limited or restricted are over the age of 45.

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/acquired-brain-injury>

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

A traumatic brain injury, or TBI, is **an injury that affects how the brain works**. TBI is a major cause of death and disability in Canada and the United States. Anyone can experience a TBI, but data suggest that some groups are at greater risk for getting a TBI or having worse health outcomes after the injury.

<https://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/index.html>

What is a concussion?

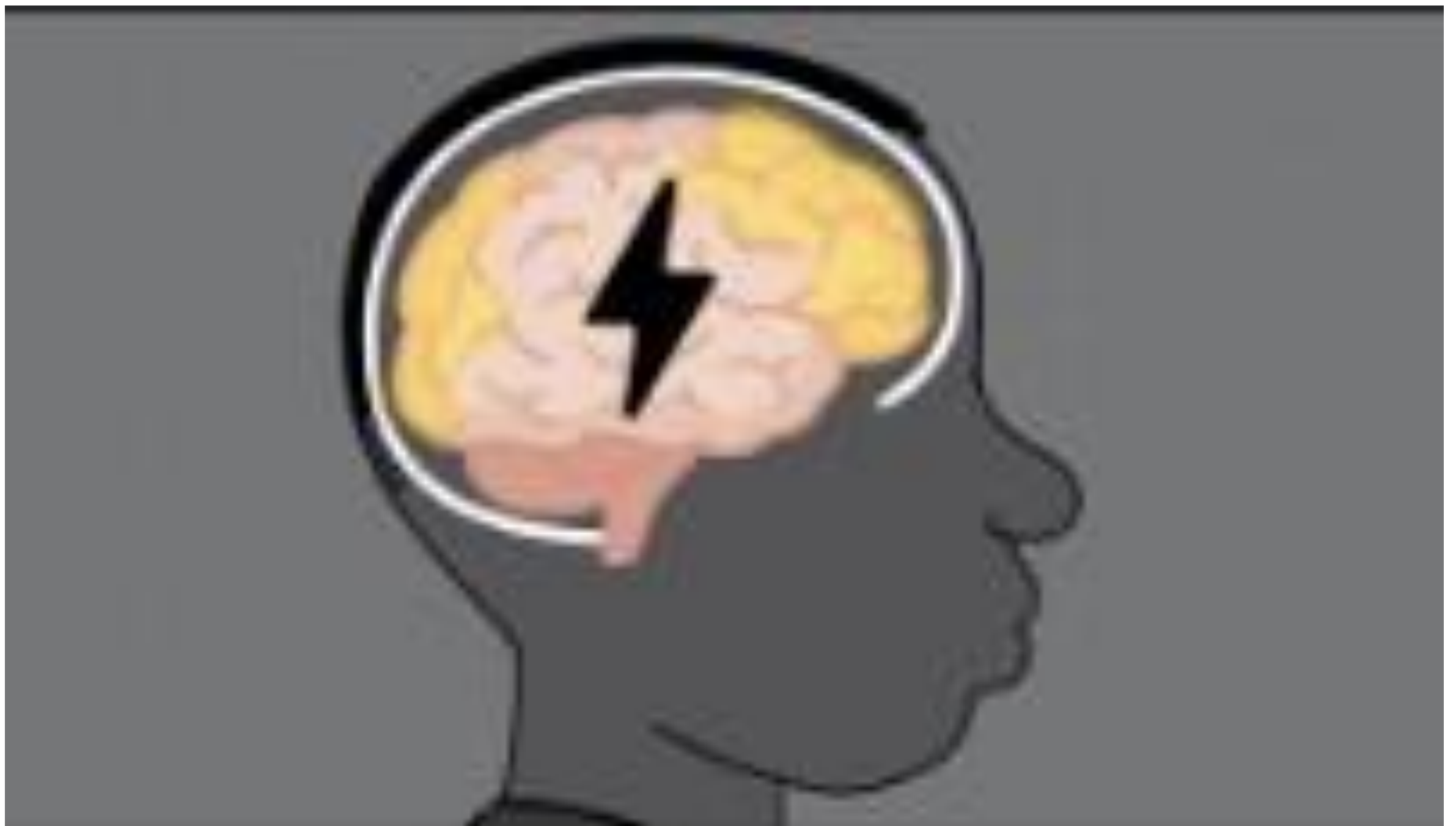
“A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury or TBI – caused by a bump, blow, or jolt or hit to the head or hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging brain cell.”
Symptoms may not appear for days or even weeks.

<https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/about/index.html>

What is a concussion?

- “Chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) is the term used to describe brain degeneration likely caused by repeated head traumas. CTE is a diagnosis made only at autopsy by studying sections of the brain.” ⁴
 - CTE is a very rare disorder that is not yet well understood. CTE is not related to the immediate consequences of a late-life episode of head trauma. CTE has a complex relationship to head traumas such as post-concussion syndrome and second impact syndrome that occur earlier in life. ²

1) <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/chronic-traumatic-encephalopathy/symptoms-causes/syc-20370921>



What is a concussion? Why do we care?

- Can only be determined by signs and symptoms while alive
 - Can only be confirmed when you're on the slab during your autopsy
- Impact may take years to surface
 - The classical punch-drunk boxer
 - Former professional sports players donating the brains for examination after their deaths ^{1,2, 3}
- Professional sports starting to care
 - NFL's Concussion & Return-to-Participation Protocol ⁴

1) <https://www.nydailynews.com/sports/football/new-study-finds-nfl-player-suffers-cte-article-1.3355228>

2) <https://www.tsn.ca/brain-of-former-nhl-player-to-be-donated-for-cte-research-family-says-1.855458>

3) <https://www.cbc.ca/playersvoice/entry/why-i-donated-my-brain-for-research>

4) <https://www.nfl.com/playerhealthandsafety/health-and-wellness/player-care/concussion-protocol-return-to-participation-protocol>

About Unity Health Toronto



Locations



Vision, Mission & Values



Leading in Health Equity



AI at Unity Health

Strategic Plan

Media Room



Redevelopment

Accountability



Quality



Sustainability



Changes in brain due to concussions persist up to 1 year after athletes medically-cleared to return to play, St. Michael's study reveals

March 13, 2025



<https://unityhealth.to/2025/03/athlete-concussion-study/>



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Conditions apply.

France rugby star Chabal doesn't remember 'single second' of career due to concussion

Rugby star Sébastien Chabal won two Six Nations titles with France, reached a World Cup semifinal and played 62 times for his nation as a powerful forward

By JEROME PUGMIRE AP sports writer
April 11, 2025, 7:09 AM



<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/france-rugby-star-chabal-remember-single-career-due-120708078>



PINK Concussions

Yesterday at 07:50 · 🌐



TODAY IN THE IRISH TIMES

As I leave today for Ireland (Thank you to everyone who donated to PINK Concussions to fund this trip), I have been blessed with the most beautiful, scientifically-accurate, compelling article on what needs to be accomplished for women in sport and beyond.

It actually brought me to tears. No ChatGPT could have written this. Thank you, Dennis Walsh.



IRISHTIMES.COM

Concussion a significant problem that goes under-reported in women's sport

Data suggests that in sports with similar rules female athletes sustain more concussions than th...

<https://www.facebook.com/100064451959169/posts/pfbid02UhvxbscRgDcXedNJeUHTwxmBKBCacajjnGwPxefTHzFRrp7wuuWmBBz6DgikFMhGU/?sfnsn=mo&mibextid=6aamW6>

► CRICKET

Aussie Will Pucovski retired at 27 due to concussions. What actually is a concussion and how does it affect the brain

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

A concussion can be described as a traumatic brain injury (TBI) which causes temporary, and in some cases, prolonged loss of normal brain function.



Authored by: Prashant Talreja

📅 08 Apr 2025 13:57 IST



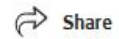
<https://www.wionews.com/cricket/aussie-will-pucovski-retired-at-27-due-to-concussions-what-actually-is-a-concussion-and-how-does-it-affect-the-brain-8938516>

The New Thinking on Concussions in Sports

Elite athletes are learning that the best way to recover from a sports-related concussion isn't to shut down all physical activity. It's to get back in a workout routine—and quickly.

By [Louise Radnofsky](#) [Follow](#)

March 2, 2025 8:00 am ET



Share



Resize



44



Listen (1 min)



<https://www.wsj.com/sports/the-new-thinking-on-concussions-in-sports-a6dab66f>

2025
News

*Always check
and follow the
directors of
your doctor!*

2,000,000
children and teens every
year
(in the USA)

Concussion in children: What to know and do, April 12, 2024. Harvard Health Publishing

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/concussion-in-children-what-to-know-and-do-202404123032> download 2024-04-16

Concussions happen at home too

- **Almost one in four concussions occur during physical sport**
- **Almost one-quarter of all concussions are due to a slip or a fall while walking**
- **16% while doing chores at home**
- **10% during a car accident**
- **8% were on the job**

Concussions happen at home too StatsCAN

<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/5563-concussions-happen-home-too> download 2024-04-16

Pink Concussion – FEMALE BRAIN INJURY from sports, violence, military service

FEMALE BRAIN INJURY

What are the differences between males and females in terms of concussion frequency, severity, symptoms, outcomes, etc.?

From **American Medical Society for Sports Medicine Position Statement: Concussion in Sport 2012**,

- Recent data suggest that in sports with similar rules female athletes **sustain more concussions** than their male counterparts.
- In addition, female athletes experience or **report a higher number and severity of symptoms** as well as a longer duration of recovery than male athletes in several studies.

<https://www.pinkconcussions.com/brain-injury>

Why do we care?

- Health & Welfare costs to society
 - “Half of homeless people have experienced traumatic brain injury: study”₁
- *Can kill!*
 - The Rowan Stringer Case, for whom the Ontario Law is named.

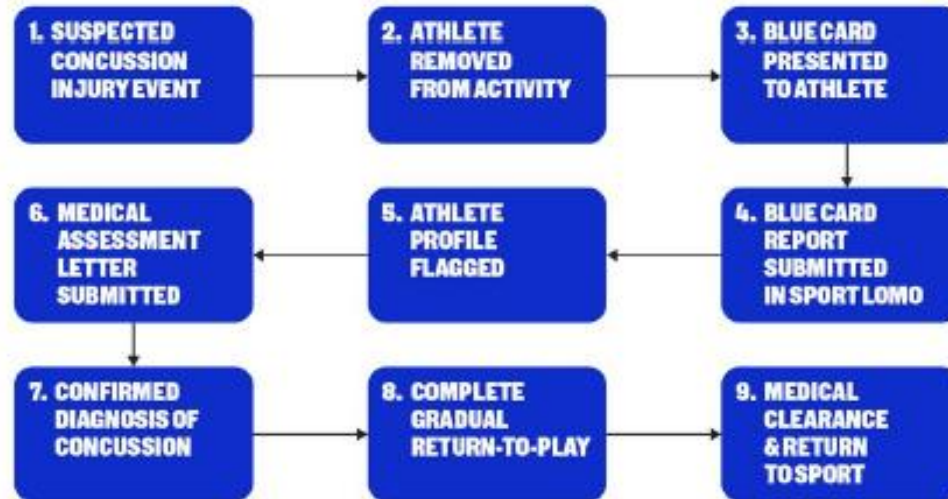
1) <https://globalnews.ca/news/6245863/homeless-traumatic-brain-injury/>


2) <https://completeconcussions.com/2016/06/01/rowans-law/>

Other Canadian Sports Take on Concussions



THE BLUE CARD PROCESS



Informing by research performed by:
 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF KINESIOLOGY & PHYSICAL EDUCATION



https://sirc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Rugby-Canada-PPT_EN.pdf

Other Canadian Sports Take on Concussions

2022 Blue Cards



https://sirc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Rugby-Canada-PPT_EN.pdf



Some Concussion Myths

- You must hit your head to have a concussion.
- You must become unconscious to have a concussion.
- Concussions are gender-neutral.
- There are diagnostic tests, e.g., blood test, that identify that a person has a concussion.
- Concussions are age insensitive.
- Helmets help protect against concussions

How to recognize a potential concussion?

- Concussion Recognition Tool 6 (CRT6)
- When in doubt, assume potential of a concussion
 - Follow first aid steps
 - *Seek proper medical attention*
 - Ensure that you comply with the organization's protocols and paperwork on concussions



CRT6™

Concussion Recognition Tool

To Help Identify Concussion in Children, Adolescents and Adults

What is the Concussion Recognition Tool?

A concussion is a brain injury. The Concussion Recognition Tool 6 (CRT6) is to be used by non-medically trained individuals for the identification and immediate management of suspected concussion. It is not designed to diagnose concussion.

Recognise and Remove

Red Flags: CALL AN AMBULANCE

If **ANY** of the following signs are observed or complaints are reported after an impact to the head or body the athlete should be immediately removed from play/game/activity and transported for urgent medical care by a healthcare professional (HCP):

- Neck pain or tenderness
- Seizure, 'fits', or convulsion
- Loss of vision or double vision
- Loss of consciousness
- Increased confusion or deteriorating conscious state (becoming less responsive, drowsy)
- Weakness or numbness/tingling in more than one arm or leg
- Repeated Vomiting
- Severe or increasing headache
- Increasingly restless, agitated or combative
- Visible deformity of the skull

Remember

- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid should be followed: assess danger at the scene, check airway, breathing, circulation; look for reduced awareness of surroundings or slowness or difficulty answering questions.
- Do not attempt to move the athlete (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so.
- Do not remove helmet (if present) or other equipment.
- Assume a possible spinal cord injury in all cases of head injury.
- Athletes with known physical or developmental disabilities should have a lower threshold for removal from play.

This tool may be freely copied in its current form for distribution to individuals, teams, groups, and organizations. Any alteration (including translations and digital re-formatting), re-branding, or sale for commercial gain is not permissible without the expressed written consent of BMJ.

If there are no Red Flags, identification of possible concussion should proceed as follows:

Concussion should be suspected after an impact to the head or body when the athlete seems different than usual. Such changes include the presence of **any one or more** of the following: visible clues of concussion, signs and symptoms (such as headache or unsteadiness), impaired brain function (e.g. confusion), or unusual behaviour.

**NEW
VERSION**



CRT6 Concussion Recognition Tool

To Help Identify Concussion in Children, Adolescents and Adults

1: Visible Clues of Suspected Concussion

Visible clues that suggest concussion include:

- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Falling unprotected to the playing surface
- Disorientation or confusion, staring or limited responsiveness, or an inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Dazed, blank, or vacant look
- Seizure, fits, or convulsions
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Unsteady on feet / balance problems or falling over / poor coordination / wobbly
- Facial injury

2: Symptoms of Suspected Concussion

Physical Symptoms	Changes in Emotions
Headache	More emotional
"Pressure in head"	More irritable
Balance problems	Sadness
Nausea or vomiting	Nervous or anxious
Drowsiness	
Dizziness	Changes in Thinking
Blurred vision	Difficulty concentrating
More sensitive to light	Difficulty remembering
More sensitive to noise	Feeling slowed down
Fatigue or low energy	Feeling like "in a fog"
"Don't feel right"	
Neck Pain	Remember, symptoms may develop over minutes or hours following a head injury.

3: Awareness

(Modify each question appropriately for each sport and age of athlete)

Failure to answer any of these questions correctly may suggest a concussion:

- "Where are we today?"
- "What event were you doing?"
- "Who scored last in this game?"
- "What team did you play last week/game?"
- "Did your team win the last game?"

Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be - IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PRACTICE OR PLAY and should NOT RETURN TO ANY ACTIVITY WITH RISK OF HEAD CONTACT, FALL OR COLLISION, including SPORT ACTIVITY until ASSESSED MEDICALLY, even if the symptoms resolve.

Athletes with suspected concussion should **NOT**:

- Be left alone initially (at least for the first 3 hours). Worsening of symptoms should lead to immediate medical attention.
- Be sent home by themselves. They need to be with a responsible adult.
- Drink alcohol, use recreational drugs or drugs not prescribed by their HCP
- Drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a healthcare professional

British Journal of Sports Medicine

Echemendia RI, et al. Br J Sports Med June 2023 Vol 57 No 11

Available here: <https://www.coach.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2024-09/crt6.pdf>



What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on routine X-rays, CT scans, or MRIs. It affects the way you may think and remember things, and can cause a variety of symptoms.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

You do not need to be knocked out (lose consciousness) to have had a concussion. You might experience one or more of the following:

Thinking Problems	How You Might Feel	Other Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not know time, date, place, period of game, opposing team, score of game • General confusion • Cannot remember things that happened before and after the injury • Knocked out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Dizziness • Feeling dazed • Feeling “dinged” or stunned; “having my bell rung” • Seeing stars, flashing lights • Ringing in the ears • Sleepiness • Loss of vision • Seeing double or blurry vision • Stomachache, stomach pain, nausea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor co-ordination or balance • Blank stare/glassy-eyed • Vomiting • Slurred speech • Slow to answer questions or follow directions • Easily distracted • Poor concentration • Strange or inappropriate emotions (i.e., laughing, crying, getting mad easily) • Not playing as well

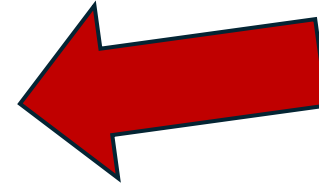
Get medical help immediately if you have any “red flag” symptoms such as neck pain, repeated vomiting, growing confusion, seizures, and weakness or tingling in your arms or legs. These may be signs of a more serious injury.

<https://coach.ca/sites/default/files/2020-01/Concussion-Guide-for-Athletes.pdf>



How to recover?

- Needs to be directed by a physician
- Their directions may include
 - Initial rest
 - Need to monitor individual with suspected concussion
 - What injured person can do and can not do
 - A staged approach recovery plan before full Return-to-Sport
- Can take weeks to months



The legal stuff AKA Rowan's Law

*

- Province of Ontario Law
 - Passed on June 7, 2016
 - Similar laws in many other jurisdictions
- As with many things in life, including laws, the devil is in the details
 - With our legal system, the devil will be in case law
 - As the law has no penalties, I doubt if there will be many cases to set precedent
 - Legal exposure to sports organization is from lawsuits arising from not following the requirements of the law when there are concussions

It seems that the intent of the law is to change the attitude of: Taking one for the team or suck it up, when your bell was rung to it's better to be safe than sorry when it comes to potential concussions especially in the younger.

If it's suspected that you have concussion, it's better take the necessary steps including withdrawing!

Who was Rowan?

Rowan's Law was named for Rowan Stringer, 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.**



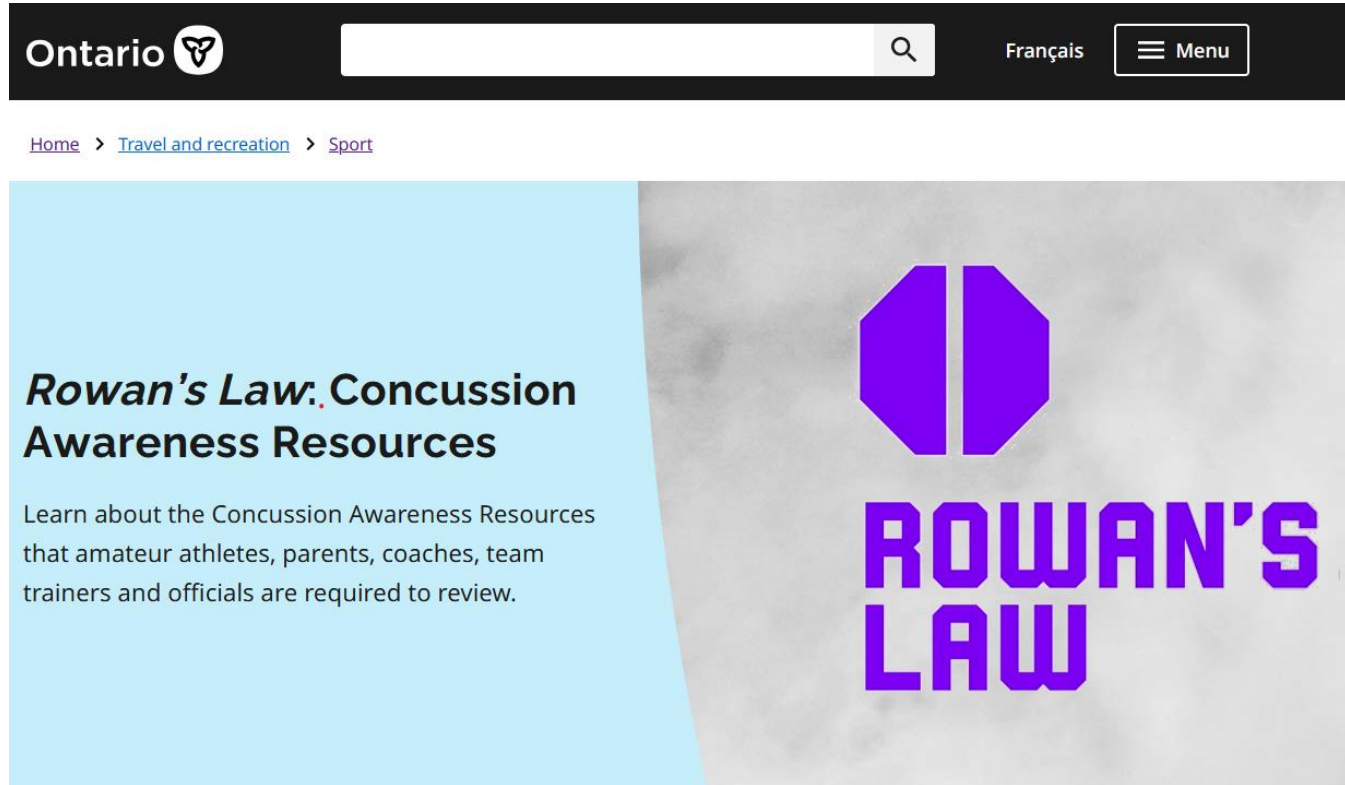
Rowan's Law and Rowan's Law Day were established to honour her memory and bring awareness to concussions and concussion safety. The last Wednesday of each September has been designated as **Rowan's Law Day** to help raise awareness about concussion safety

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/rowans-law-day>

The legal stuff AKA Rowan's Law

	PARTICIPANTS	OFFICIALS (*)	THE ORGANIZATION
Must have Policy & Protocols			X
Mandatory Annual Awareness Education & confirmation	X	X	X
Recognize possible concussion	X	X	
Removal-From-Sports	X	X	X
Mandatory Removal-From-Sports		X	X
Including mandatory reporting	X	X	X
Return-to-Play/Sports Protocols	X	X	X
Mandatory Return-to-Play/Sports Protocols		X	X
Mandatory Tracking		X	X

Ontario's Rowan's Law: Concussion Awareness Resources – Must View!



Receipt of Review of Concussion Awareness Resource

- Thank you for completing your review of the Concussion Awareness Resource.
- Under *Rowan's Law*, your sport organization will ask you to confirm that you reviewed one of the Concussion Awareness Resources in this website (Ontario.ca/concussions) before you can register/participate in a sport.
 - You must review one of the resources once a year, and then confirm that you have completed the review every time you register with a sport organization. If you want to use this form to show that you have reviewed the concussion awareness resource, you can provide the completed form to your sport organization(s).
 - If you would like to have a record of your review of the concussion awareness resource, you can complete this form and keep it as a receipt to remind you of the date on which you reviewed it.
 - Once you complete this form, you can save it (to your personal device/computer) or print this page to share with your sport organization and/or to serve as a reminder of when to review the Concussion Awareness Resources again next year.

Receipt of Review

I, _____ (name) confirm that I have reviewed a Concussion Awareness Resource.

Signature Date

Disclaimer: Your completion of this form will not constitute confirmation that you have reviewed the concussion awareness resources for the purpose of *Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety)*, 2018. If you want to use this form to show that you have reviewed the concussion awareness resources, you must provide the completed form to your sport organization(s). This form will not be saved by the Government of Ontario and the Government of Ontario assumes no responsibility for confirming that you have reviewed the concussion awareness resource.

MUST VIEW: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/rowans-law-concussion-awareness-resources>

Acceptance of BBRMC Concussion Management Policy and Concussion Codes of Conduct

- Needs to be done by each Person-in-Charge (PIC) & crew
- Needs to be done Annually; doing one covers all BBRMC events
- <https://www.bpyc.on.ca/index.php/racing/race-documents/2025-race-documents>

Resources (The Law)

- Ontario Government Resources
 - [Rowan's Law: Concussion safety](#)
- Ontario Sailing Resources
 - [Concussion Information](#)
- BBRMC Resources
 - <https://www.bpyc.on.ca/index.php/racing/race-documents/2025-race-documents>

Must annually review Ontario's material

Starting place for PIC & crew to confirm compliance

Resources (Other)

- [Parachute Canada Concussion Resources](#)
- [Coaching Association of Canada](#)
- [Sports Information Resource Centre \(SIRC\)](#)
- [Concussion Awareness Training Tool](#)

Most misleading name

Really Good Stuff

Obtain help

- [Brain Injury Canada](#)
- [Brain Injury Society of Canada](#)
- [Concussion Legacy Foundation](#)
- [NFL's Concussion Protocol & Return-to-Participation Protocol](#)
- [Pink Concussion - FEMALE BRAIN INJURY from sports, violence, military service](#)
- Concussion Education and Training – St Luke's Health System (20:46)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6KRFOM5J3g>
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - CDC HEADS UP
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html>

Wrap-up

Questions?