



Dear Parents,

As you know, New Hartford Wolverines Football and Cheer has been committed to our children by instilling timeless values and physical fitness through the fun of football.

And now we've found a way to do it better.

By partnering with USA Football, the official youth football development partner of the NFL, we have strengthened our program by adopting Heads Up Football, a new way to teach and play better, safer football.

Endorsed by medical experts in the area of concussion as well as football experts on all levels of the game, Heads Up Football affords our league the following:

- Football's only nationally certified coaching education course for all head and assistant coaches
- Concussion awareness and education for all coaches
- Safer tackling and blocking techniques to lessen the risk for head injuries
- League-wide instruction on proper equipment fitting, helmets in particular
- The latest information on heat- and hydration-related issues
- Instructions and procedures on how to react in situations of sudden cardiac arrest

USA Football's Heads Up Football program also includes two clinics before the start of the season: an instructional clinic for coaches and a player safety clinic for parents and players.

In addition to earning coaching certification, each Wolverine coach receives USA Football's online coaching tools to better teach your child, including a video drills library, a practice planner, playbooks and more.

Parents are encouraged to be involved throughout the process to ensure their youth players are learning Heads Up Football skills. Take full advantage of the health and safety resources offered by USA Football, by registering for a free Parent/Player Membership at <http://www2.usafootball.com/register/player>.

Among our most important initiatives is helping athletes and their coaches know the signs and symptoms of a concussion; and what to do if they suspect an athlete has a head injury. In order to accomplish this, we follow a strict concussion protocol, and maintain proper equipment fitting and coach trainings. It is important that equipment is not modified in any way, to include changing of parts or adjustments, without first reviewing with a coach. Your child's health and safety is our highest priority – nothing else comes close.

With your involvement and through new and exciting teaching resources, I look forward to our finest season to date in 2017.

Sincerely,

New Hartford Wolverines



## CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT AND RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

Concussions and other brain injuries can be serious and potentially life threatening injuries in sports including football or cheer. Research indicates that these brain injuries can have serious consequences later in life if not managed properly and professionally. In an effort to combat and minimize this injury the following concussion protocol will be used for Wolverine Youth Football & Cheer youth athletes suspected of sustaining a concussion. The diagnosis, management and protocol can vary depending on appropriate healthcare professionals and physicians.

### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion occurs when there is a direct or indirect insult to the brain. As a result, transient impairment of mental functions such as memory, balance/equilibrium, and vision may occur. It is important to recognize that many sport- related concussions do not result in loss of consciousness and, therefore, all suspected head injuries must be taken seriously. Coaches and fellow teammates can be helpful in identifying those who may potentially have a concussion, because a concussed athlete may not be aware of their condition or potentially by trying to hide the injury to stay in the game or practice. Available on the USA Football website, or from our teams Safety Coordinator, is information on concussion awareness, this information should be reviewed in connection with and as a part of concussion management. Further, all coaches and administrators are to be certified; part of the certification process is completion of a concussion awareness certificate program.

### CONCUSSION PROTOCOL:

1. A youth athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion will be evaluated at a game by a trainer/EMT, officials, or coaches looking for symptoms of a concussion – “if in doubt sit it out” is the guiding principle as safety is paramount. Athletic trainers may use the ImPACT testing system, a standardized assessment of concussion test, or other means and tests as deemed necessary in a preliminary analysis.
2. A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed promptly and immediately by the officials, trainer/EMT and/or coaches and shall not further participate that day. The athlete shall not play or practice until evaluated for a concussion by an appropriately licensed physician trained in the evaluation and management of a concussion. The athlete shall not return to practice or play until he or she receives written clearance and release to play; such release shall be provided to the team and the New Hartford Wolverine commissioner.
3. Once a youth athlete is cleared by a physician the youth athlete will begin the Graduated Return to Play Protocol. Once beginning any physical activity symptoms should not return. In the event symptoms come back the athlete returns to step one in the Graduated Return to Play Protocol. The following steps can be modified only by a physician or appropriately trained medical professional:



## Graduated Return to Play Protocol

<b>1. NO ACTIVITY</b>  <b>(RECOVERY)</b>  <i>Complete Physical and Cognitive Rest until Medical Clearance</i>	<b>2. LIGHT AEROBIC EXERCISE</b>  <b>(INCREASE HEART RATE)</b>  <i>Walking, Swimming, Stationary Cycling</i>  <b>Heart Rate &lt; 70% - 15 min</b>	<b>3. SPORT SPECIFIC EXERCISE</b>  <b>(ADD MOVEMENT)</b>  <i>Skating Drills (Ice Hockey), Running Drills (Soccer, etc.)</i>  <b>NO Head Impact Activities</b>  <b>Heart Rate &lt; 80% - 45 min</b>	<b>4. NON-CONTACT TRAINING DRILLS</b>  <b>(INCREASED EXERCISE, COORDINATION &amp; ATTENTION)</b>  <i>Progress to Complex Training Drills (e.g., Passing Drills, etc.)</i>  <b>May Start Resistance Training</b>  <b>Heart Rate &lt; 90% - 60 min</b>	<b>5. FULL CONTACT PRACTICE</b>  <b>(RESTORE CONFIDENCE &amp; ASSESS FUNCTIONAL SKILLS)</b>  <b>If Symptom Free, Return to Normal Training Activities</b>
<i>Symptom Free for 24 Hours?</i>  <b>Yes:</b> Begin Step 2  <b>No:</b> Continue Resting	<i>Symptom Free for Next 24 hours?</i>  <b>Yes:</b> Move to Step 3  <b>No:</b> Rest Further until Symptom Free	<i>Symptom Free for Next 24 Hours?</i>  <b>Yes:</b> Move to Step 4  <b>No:</b> Return to Step 2 until Symptom Free	<i>Symptom Free for Next 24 Hours?</i>  <b>Yes:</b> Move to Step 5  <b>No:</b> Return to Step 3 until Symptom Free	<i>Symptom Free Next 24 Hours?</i>  <b>Yes:</b> Return to Play  <b>No:</b> Return to Step 4 until Symptom Free
Date Attained:	Date Attained:	Date Attained:	Date Attained:	Date Attained:

Reference: Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich (2008). *Br J of Sports Med* 2009; 43: i76-i84 doi:10.1136/bjism.2009.058248



## Concussion Acknowledgement and Signature Form for Parents and Student Athletes

Athlete's Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, as the parent or legal guardian of the above named student, have received and read the Concussion Information Sheet. I understand the nature and risk of concussion and brain injury to youth athletes, including the risks of continuing to play after concussion or brain injury. I will inform the coaches and athletic coordinator of any concussive symptoms that I observe.

I also understand that if my child is believed to have concussive symptoms, that he or she must be evaluated by a physician and cleared to play. After written medical clearance is given, my child will engage in the return to play protocol, after being released by their physician.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date