

SPORTS CONCUSSION NEW ENGLAND

Smarter, Safer Concussion Management for the Student Athlete

5 Key Steps...Straightforward... Comprehensive...A Team Approach

STEP 1 Concussion Education for Players, Coaches, Parents, and School Staff

- Focused pre-season meetings for players, coaches, and parents that include:
 - Basic information about concussion signs, symptoms, and recovery
 - How cognitive and sideline testing are used
 - Risks of returning to contact too soon
 - Effects of concussion on school performance
- Seminars for school personnel to better prepare them to support student athletes recovering from concussions



STEP 2 Baseline Testing with ImPACT®

- Contact-sports players take a pre-season computerized test to establish their baseline level of memory, reaction time, and processing speed.
- **ImPACT®** (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) is the best-researched and most widely-used software for this purpose.

STEP 3 Post-Concussion Evaluation

- Teams are trained in the use of a standard sideline test that screens for common concussion symptoms and cognitive dysfunction.
- ImPACT® testing is repeated in the days immediately following the concussion to track the athlete's recovery. Results are analyzed by Neal McGrath, Ph.D., a Credentialed ImPACT® Consultant Neuropsychologist.

STEP 4 Academic Support During Recovery

- Many student athletes have difficulty meeting academic demands in school after a concussion due to ongoing symptoms.
- Office evaluation is available to identify individualized, specific accommodations that will allow the injured student to keep up in school as much as possible while facilitating the recovery process.
- Specialized clinical consultation can be provided to teachers, guidance counselors and parents

STEP 5 Return-to-Play Decision Support

- Deciding when an athlete who has had a concussion is ready to return to a contact sport is often difficult for even experienced athletic trainers, team physicians, coaches, and family doctors. Parents rely on the judgment of these professionals.
- Neuropsychological consultation with objective cognitive testing provides invaluable expert support to these professionals.
- Knowing that symptoms have fully cleared and cognitive testing is back to baseline provides the best assurance that the student athlete is ready to return to full contact without undue risk of complications.
- By providing a state-of-the-art program with clear guidelines that support timely and safe return to play, school administrators, athletic departments, and families can feel greater confidence in these decisions.

Neal McGrath, Ph.D. has been a well-known neuropsychologist in the Boston area for over 20 years. He has specialized in the evaluation and rehabilitation of traumatic brain injuries. Dr. McGrath is New England's first Credentialed ImPACT® Consultant. His work has been featured on WCVB-TV's *Chronicle* and WGBH-TV's *Greater Boston*. He is the Clinical Director and founder of **Sports Concussion New England**, now serving over a dozen schools in Massachusetts and individual student athletes from many high schools, colleges, and elementary schools in New England. Dr. McGrath is also a consulting neuropsychologist for the MENTOR Acquired Brain Injury Program/Center for Comprehensive Services - New England and the Massachusetts Statewide Head Injury Program.