HEAVENS ELEVEN FC

Concussion Policy

When In Doubt • Sit Out — Recognize • Remove • Recover
In Accordance with Rowan's Law, Ontario Soccer & Canada Soccer

Effective: November 15, 2026 | Review: Annually



WHEN IN DOUBT • SIT OUT — Recognize, remove, recover. Graphic created by Heavens Eleven FC.

Our Promise

When in doubt, sit out. A concussion is a brain injury. It must be taken seriously — every time.

No game is worth a brain injury. No player will be punished for sitting out, for telling a coach they feel unwell, or for needing time to recover.

This Policy applies to everyone — players, parents/guardians, coaches, team personnel, volunteers, staff, Board members, referees, spectators, and visitors — at practice, games, tournaments, festivals, team travel, team events, and online, whenever representing Heavens Eleven FC.

Heavens Eleven FC follows Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2018 (Ontario), Ontario Soccer Concussion Policy, Canada Soccer Safe Sport, and the Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics. Where there is a conflict, the law and the governing organization(s) — Ontario Soccer / Canada Soccer / Abuse-Free Sport — rules prevail.

What Is A Concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a blow to the head, face, neck, or body that makes the brain move inside the skull. It can happen without a loss of consciousness, and without a direct hit to the head.

A second concussion before the first one heals can cause serious, long-term harm — including Second Impact Syndrome. That is why we remove, rest, and return step by step.

1. Know The Signs



KNOW THE SIGNS — Headache, dizzy, confused. Graphic created by Heavens Eleven FC.

Signs a coach / parent / teammate might see:

- Headache, pressure in head, neck pain
- Dizziness, balance problems, "not feeling right"
- Confusion, difficulty remembering, "foggy" feeling
- Sensitivity to light / noise
- Nausea / vomiting, drowsiness, sleep changes
- Difficulty concentrating, slow to answer, slurred speech
- Loss of consciousness (even for a moment)
- Mood changes — sad, irritable, anxious, "not themselves"

If you see any of these signs after a hit — assume a concussion until a doctor says otherwise.

2. Remove Right Away

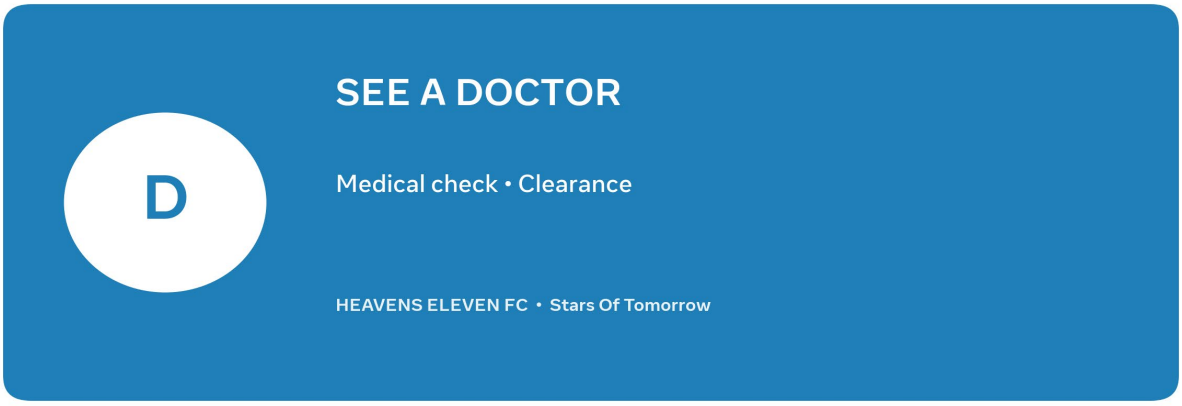


REMOVE RIGHT AWAY — Stop, safe, tell parent. Graphic created by Heavens Eleven FC.

- Remove: Remove the player from play / practice / game immediately. Do NOT let them return that day — even if they say they feel better.
- Safe: Keep the player safe, calm, and supervised. Do NOT leave them alone. Do NOT let them drive / go home alone if they are unwell.
- Tell Parent / Guardian: Tell the parent/guardian right away — in person and in writing — what happened, what you saw, and what to watch for.
- Call 911 If: Loss of consciousness, worsening headache, repeated vomiting, slurred speech, weakness, numbness, confusion that gets worse, or any sign of a serious injury — call 911 and give first aid.
- Record: Complete an Incident Form the same day and give it to the Safe Sport Lead / Board.

Any coach, referee, team personnel, or Club official can remove a player for a suspected concussion. No one can overrule a concussion removal.

3. See A Doctor — Medical Check & Clearance



SEE A DOCTOR — Medical check, clearance. Graphic created by Heavens Eleven FC.

- See a doctor / nurse practitioner as soon as possible — same day if possible.

- Follow the doctor's advice — rest, limit screen time, limit physical activity, and return to school / work as advised.
- Medical Clearance: A player must have written medical clearance from a doctor / nurse practitioner before returning to soccer — no clearance, no play.
- Tell the Club: Give a copy of the medical clearance to the Club — [Club to complete] — before returning to practice / game.
- If symptoms return, stop again, see a doctor again, and tell the Club again.

4. Return Step By Step — Rest, Learn, Play



RETURN STEP BY STEP — Rest, learn, play. Graphic created by Heavens Eleven FC.

Return will follow Ontario Soccer / Parachute Canada Return-to-Sport steps — with medical clearance at the right step. Do NOT skip steps.

- Step 1 — Rest: Rest, limit physical activity, and follow doctor's advice. No soccer, no PE, no contact.
- Step 2 — Light Activity: Light walking, light activity as advised by doctor — no contact, no heading, no risk of fall / hit.
- Step 3 — Learn: Return to school / learning as advised. If school is not back to normal, soccer is not back to normal.
- Step 4 — Train (No Contact): Light training, no contact, no heading, no scrimmage — with medical clearance.
- Step 5 — Train (With Contact): Full training with contact — with medical clearance, and only if no symptoms return.
- Step 6 — Play: Return to game — with medical clearance, and only if no symptoms return.

If symptoms return at any step — go back to the previous step, rest, and see a doctor again. Tell the Club right away.

5. Rowan's Law — Learn, Sign, Follow



ROWAN'S LAW — Learn, sign, follow. Graphic created by Heavens Eleven FC.

- Learn: Every player, parent/guardian, coach, team personnel, and trainer must review Ontario Concussion Awareness Resources for their age group — every year — before the season starts.
- Sign: Every player, parent/guardian, coach, team personnel, and trainer must sign a Rowan's Law Acknowledgment Form — every year — before the season starts.
- Follow: Follow this Policy, the Incident Form, and the Return-to-Sport steps — every time.
- Teach: Coaches will teach players how to head safely, how to fall safely, and how to tell a coach if they feel unwell — and will remind players "When in doubt, sit out."

Rowan's Law Resources:

- Ontario Concussion Awareness Resources — Ages 10 and under, 11-14, 15 and older — [Club to complete — link / handout]
- Parachute Canada — Concussion resources — parachute.ca

What Everyone Will NOT Do

- Will not let a player return to play the same day after a suspected concussion.
- Will not let a player return without written medical clearance.
- Will not pressure, tease, or punish a player for sitting out or needing time to recover.
- Will not skip Return-to-Sport steps.
- Will not hide a concussion, or tell a player to "tough it out."

Concussion Acknowledgment — Rowan's Law

By signing, I confirm I have reviewed the Ontario Concussion Awareness Resources for my age group, I understand this Concussion Policy, and I will follow it. I understand: When in doubt, sit out. Remove right away. See a doctor. Return step by step — with medical clearance. I understand failure to follow it may result in discipline up to removal and referral to Ontario Soccer / Canada Soccer / Abuse-Free Sport.

Player Full Name: _____ Team / Age Group: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Parent / Guardian 1:

Name (print): _____ Signature: _____
Date: _____

Parent / Guardian 2 (if applicable):

Name (print): _____ Signature: _____
Date: _____

Player (if 18+): Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Coach / Team Personnel:

Name (print): _____ Signature: _____
Date: _____

Technical Lead / Head Coach: _____ Safe Sport Lead: _____ Phone/Email: _____ [Club to complete]

This is a standalone Concussion Policy for Heavens Eleven FC, in accordance with Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2018, Ontario Soccer Concussion Policy, Canada Soccer Safe Sport, and the Canada Soccer Code of Conduct and Ethics. It is part of the Club's safeguarding documents. Graphics are original Heavens Eleven FC graphics. They are not reproductions of Ontario Soccer's official logos or graphics. It is not legal or medical advice. Have the Board adopt it by motion, have Ontario Soccer / legal / medical review if possible, and store signed copies securely.