



What's the Buzz About Concussions?

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There has been a lot of buzz in the sports media about the controversial decision made by Texas Tech head football coach, Mike Leach. Last week Coach Leach was fired secondary to his decision to send a player, with a concussion, to a sports medicine shed and sit there for the duration of practice. I can't tell you the facts about what actually happened that day (because I wasn't there), but I can tell the hard facts about concussions.

FACTS:

1. Concussion Definition: When the brain moves rapidly inside the skull creating a bruise on the brain caused by a collision, a hard hit to the head or a fall.
2. Signs: Loss of consciousness, confusion, irritability, clumsiness, memory problems, disorientation and loss of coordination.
3. Symptoms: Headache, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, balance problems, difficulty concentrating, feeling mentally foggy, drowsiness, troubles sleeping and sensitivity to light and blurry vision.
4. Classifications: There are many "classification" scales for concussions, ranking them mild to severe. However, there is new evidence and a current push to lose the scales and classify and treat all concussions the same, no matter the severity. All concussions are serious!
5. Treatment: The player should be taken to the sports medicine team for evaluation, assessment and further plan of care. Rest, Rest, Rest! And, we are talking physical and mental rest!
6. Guidelines for Returning to Sports: Based on the progress of the athlete, a member of the sports medicine team will determine the appropriate time to release him/her back to sports.
7. Second Impact Syndrome: A condition where an athlete returns to play too soon after a concussion and sustains another concussion before the brain recovers from the first one. This can lead to long term problems, brain swelling (increase in intracranial pressure), permanent brain damage or even death.

Now you know the serious facts about the concussion buzz. Remember, we're just a phone call away if you need help in determining what to do when these situations arise.

For more information please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:
<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/index.html>