

Concussion Law

As the 2013-2014 school year begins, student athletes have a new South Carolina law in place to protect them while participating in sports. On June 7th, Governor Nikki Haley signed the Student Athletes Concussion bill, becoming the 49th state to pass legislation on the management of sports related concussions. The push for concussion legislation was initiated after a 13 year old boy sustained an undiagnosed concussion during a football game; he continued to play only to collapse on the field. This student athlete survived but his life has forever been altered, requiring significant care and therapy just to perform daily activities. From this tragedy, the Zackery Lystedt Law was created, making the state of Washington the first to pass such a law. Other states followed suit in order to protect student athletes and insure safe playing environments.



To avoid a similar tragedy, the new South Carolina law requires school districts to create policies based on nationally recognized guidelines and procedures on how to properly identify and manage possible concussions sustained by student athletes during participation. If at any time a student athlete is suspected of having sustained a concussion, he/she is to be immediately removed from participation and may not return until evaluated by a healthcare professional (such as a Certified Athletic Trainer or Physician). If an athlete does have a concussion, he/she must be cleared by a physician, with documentation in writing, before he/she returns to sports. In addition, school districts are responsible for educating parents, student athletes, and coaches on concussions and the dangers associated with not reporting and playing with possible concussion.

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