

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 12 April, 2024

UPDATE TO NETBALL'S CONCUSSION PROTOCOLS

Netball Australia has released important updates to the concussion protocols for all levels of the sport, including community netball.

Where there are advanced care settings at the Origin Australian Diamonds and Suncorp Super Netball elite levels, the mandatory minimum 12-day return to play protocol will be maintained.

The minimum 12-day protocol provides a platform for the management of elite athletes under the constant care of club medical professionals.

[Click here to view Netball Australia's elite policy.](#)

In a significant update to community guidelines, all netball competitions at all ages, including Netball Australia pathway programs, adult/open competitions and all junior competitions, will adopt a minimum 21-day return to play protocol.

Under the new community netball guidelines, the earliest that a player that has sustained a concussion can return to play is on the 21st day post the concussion incident provided they get medical clearance.

The new guidelines, which are designed to protect the health and wellbeing of all participants, are in alignment with the recent Australian Institute of Sport's Concussion and Brain Health Position Statement.

[Click here to view Netball Australia's community guidelines.](#)

The different guidelines for elite and community netball reflect the differences in the level of medical resources that are generally available at the elite level of the game that generally do not exist to the same degree in other competitions.

Netball Australia's concussion protocols are reviewed annually. The protocols have been prepared by Netball Australia's Chief Medical Officer Dr Laura Lallenc in conjunction with Member Organisations, Suncorp Super Netball teams and the Australian Netball Players' Association.

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“Netball Australia’s concussion protocols have been developed to protect all players at all of levels of the sport,” Dr Lallenec said.

“Our protocols are consistent with the impact and collision codes, and are developed in line with up to date medical and scientific evidence. Our priority is ensuring concussion is managed according to best practice and to reduce the risks of concussion in netball.

“The revised community guidelines mark a significant advancement in Netball Australia’s commitment to the health and wellbeing of all players who participate in netball, from grassroots through to the elite level.”

Netball Australia has also made a number of changes to further protect Suncorp Super Netball League players ahead of the 2024 season, which begins this Saturday 13 April:

- In addition to the home team’s doctor, an independent match day doctor will be present at all Suncorp Super Netball matches. The independent match day doctor is available to support the identification of suspected concussions and is responsible for assessing any head impact for the away team. For derbies both the home and away team doctors will be in attendance.
- Tablets with match footage will be accessible by all doctors for video review of head impacts.
- A mandatory minimum 10-minute period for the doctor to complete a full clinical assessment of a suspected concussion including but not limited to a SCAT6 assessment.

Netball Australia has recently commissioned research to better understand the common mechanisms that concussions occur in our sport by undertaking video analysis of concussions sustained in the Suncorp Super Netball League since 2018. Netball Australia is also participating in the AIS Concussion and Brain Health Project on retired and former elite athletes.

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MEDIA CONTACT

Netball Australia Head of Media and PR | Georgina Cahill
0423 656 074 | georgina.cahill@netball.com.au

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