Concussion Management with ImPACT and OptoGait

Concussion: One of the hottest and most frightening words in the athletics world today. In recent news, society been impacted by how and why former NFL players, such as Junior Seau, have taken their own lives and donated their brains to medical research. Publicity is also being brought to youth athletics (especially female soccer players) and emphasis is being placed on educating young athletes, their families, and their coaches about the seriousness of and proper management of concussions.

PSSM realizes that concussion management can be stressful for athletes and their families. Questions such as “who do I need to see? How do I know when it is safe to return to play? Who is available to answer my questions through the process?” can leave you frustrated and lost. For this reason, PSSM has decided to offer a new service line to all local athletes. Concussion Management with ImPACT and OptoGait testing.

Some of you reading this may already be familiar with ImPACT. ImPACT is currently the gold standard for baseline and post-concussion cognitive testing. ImPACT testing is already being implemented in many, if not all, local high school athletic programs, college, and professional athletic programs. However, PSSM recognizes that children as young as 10 years old may be at risk for concussions and that youth athletic associations need assistance in providing the opportunity to have their athletes baseline tested. Therefore, PSSM is now reaching out to all local youth organizations and extreme sport enthusiasts to educate and increase awareness of concussions.

1. Where to find valid and reliable information on concussions? What is ImPACT? (http://www.impacttest.com/). On this site, you will find extensive information such as common signs and symptoms, proper concussion management tips, and common misconceptions. You will also learn about what ImPACT is and how it used to help track and monitor athletes through their recovery.

2. Why should I and/or my child come to PSSM for Concussion Management? On site, under one roof, PSSM offers a true sports medicine team consisting that understands the complexity of head injuries and the importance of a safe return to play protocol (physically and mentally). Matt Shade (certified athletic trainer) has worked with concussed athletes from middle school ages through the collegiate levels since 2005. He has been using and administering ImPACT tests since 2009 in his concussion management protocol. PSSM also has relationships with local neurologists.

OptoGait technology is available at PSSM as well which sets us apart from the rest. OptoGait enables us to objectively and quantitatively track and monitor athletes’ physical performance during recovery. With OptoGait, we will be able to see both the mental and physical components of athletes’ performance.

3. Let’s get started! What’s the next step? If you are between the ages of 10 and 59 and are involved in contact sports, high risk activities (i.e. skiing, snowboarding, skateboarding, and extreme sports) set up an appointment today to begin your baseline testing. Your results will be saved on file at PSSM and provided to you for your personal records. Baseline ImPACT results are valid for 2 years for ages 10-19. Testing is easy and only takes approximately one hour of your time (including OptoGait testing). During your baseline testing, you will also familiarize yourself with the PSSM staff and this will put you at ease if you ever do sustain a head injury: You will know who to turn to for guidance and direction.

Concussions are a frightening injury and occur in a split second. All it takes is one collision or one fall. The best thing you can do for yourself and/or child is to be aware, be educated and be prepared. Keep your head in the game at PSSM!