

## **Medical Protocol for Removing Injured Athletes from Competition**

### **BACKGROUND**

Current and past Medical Services Directors have requested to know the BC Games Society policy on removing athletes from competition when injuries warrant such measures. The crux of the issue is who gets the final say in whether an athlete continues to compete or not, the medical volunteer, the athlete, the parent/guardian, the coach, the Host Community Board?

Until the Core Sport policy was implemented, such a policy was noted needed as the participants in the Games were of a lower caliber level.

The purpose of this policy is to clearly identify who has the authority to remove an athlete from competition at the Games. Note, that while athletes have been removed from competition due to injury in the past, those decisions have never been challenged. As the calibre of competition increases and as more PSOs use the BC Games as a qualification for other competition, the stakes get higher for athletes. As a result, the potential increases for a situation where an injured athlete wants to continue competing in order to be seen by scouts or qualify for other competitions. On the other side of the issue, is an athlete who is permitted to continue to compete and as a result becomes more severely and/or permanently injured.

In an effort to be proactive and ensure that Host Society volunteers are supported, the Medical Protocol (for Removing Injured Athletes from Competition) was developed.

### **PRINCIPLES**

The foundation principles of this policy, which are supported by the PSOs, are that:

- The general health and well-being of each athlete is the priority.
- The long-term ability of each athlete to compete in their chosen sport takes precedence over their ability to compete at the current BC Games.
- This policy is in place to support Medical Clinic and venue physicians in the assessment of high-risk injuries that could impact the long-term ability of an athlete to compete in their chosen sport.

### **APPLICATION**

#### **POLICY AND PROCESS**

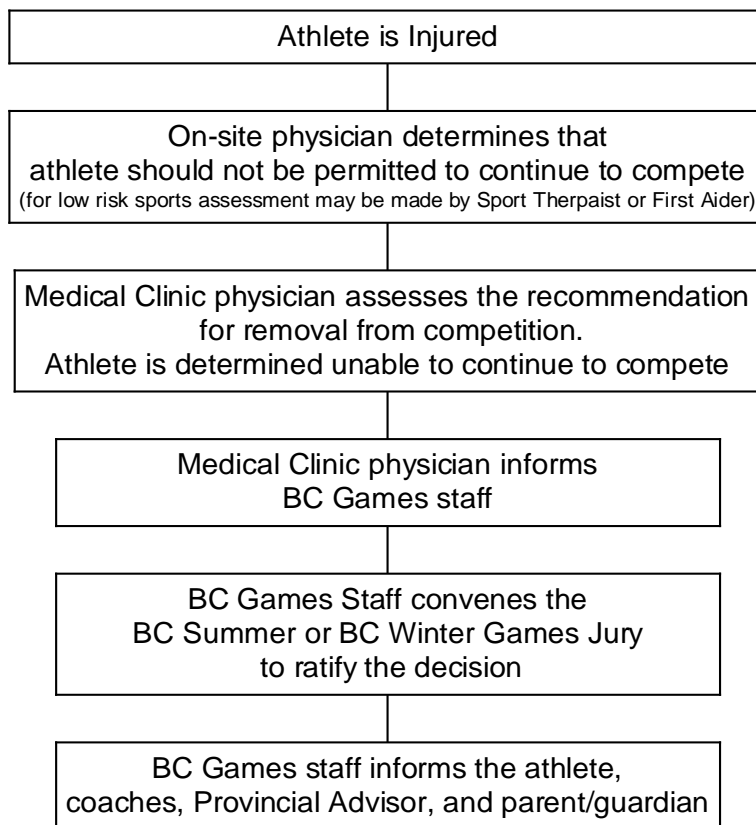
- Absolute indications to remove an athlete from competition will include, but are not restricted to:
  - transient mental status impairment, visual impairment, contagious skin conditions, cardiopulmonary instability, concussion, suspected spinal injury, musculoskeletal injuries in which there is significant risk of further injury to the athlete, suspected fractures, and suspected visceral injury.
- Venue physicians assess athlete injuries onsite. Where injury warrants, the venue physician will recommend to the Medical Clinic physician that an athlete be removed

from competition. At low risk venues or where no physician is stationed, the venue Sport Therapist or First Aider will make the initial assessment and the recommendation to the Medical Clinic physician.

- The Medical Clinic physician makes an assessment of the injured athlete and then reports the recommended removal from competition to the Director of Medical Services, who reports to the BC Games staff responsible for sport and the Medical Services Director.
- The Director of Medical Services and/or the Medical Clinic physician will inform the athlete of their removal from competition. It is recommended that an adult be present with the athlete (i.e. the coach or a parent).

There is no appeal to the removal decision; however, if the athlete (or coach or parent) challenges the removal from competition (or if the Director of Medical Services and/or the Medical Clinic physician anticipate that the removal from competition will be challenged), the Director of Medical Services will contact BC Games staff.

- BC Games staff will convene the BC Winter or BC Summer Games Jury (Games Jury) to receive the assessment from the Medical Clinic physician. The Games Jury will ratify the decision for removal from competition and inform the athlete, the athlete's coach(es), the Provincial Advisor for the sport, and the athlete's parent or guardian of the decision.
  - The athlete will be given a full explanation for the decision to remove him/her from competition by BC Games staff in conjunction with the Medical Services Director and/or the Medical Clinic physician.
  - The explanation for removal from competition will be noted clearly on the athlete's medical injury report form by the Medical Clinic physician and the physician (or for low risk venues, the Sport Therapist or First Aider) involved in the decision. The form will be signed by the Medical Clinic physician.
- The decision of the Games Jury is final and cannot be appealed. However, after the appropriate treatment, if a reassessment is made and it is determined that the risk to competition no longer exists, the athlete may be permitted to return to competition upon the recommendation of the Medical Clinic physician and ratification of the Sport Jury.
- BC Games staff will inform the Host Society Board and the BC Games Society President and CEO of the removal of athletes from competition.



## NOTES

- Competition or play is not suspended while the decision process outlined above is being made. Should the injured athlete be permitted to play he/she would be entered back into competition at the next available opportunity.
- It is understood that an injury may occur that makes it possible for the athlete to continue to compete. This may occur while the venue physician (or in the case of low-risk sports, a Sport Therapist or First Aider) informs the Medical Clinic physician of their recommendation and the Games Jury is convened. Only the Games Jury has the authority to remove an injured athlete from competition.
- If the removal decision was provided to the athlete (and coach or parent) by the Director of Medical Services and/or the Medical Clinic physician and there was no concern or challenge about the decision, this is seen as having gone through the Games Jury. BC Games staff will be notified and the removal from competition will be noted.
- It is not the intention of this policy that the Games Jury would overturn a recommendation of the Medical Clinic physician on the removal from competition. The intention is that the Games Jury would support the Director of Medical Services and the Medical Clinic physician in delivering this message where the decision to remove from competition has been (or may be) challenged.

Revised: November 1, 2016