6. Return to Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Policy: Return to Play</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Approved By: Dr. Michael Moser</td>
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</tbody>
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**Purpose**
The athletic trainer is a medical professional who has been certified and trained in returning athletes to sport after they have sustained an injury. This policy serves as guidelines as to when it is appropriate to return an athlete to full participation. In the event that a student athlete requires further evaluation, the athletic trainer must follow the referral procedure to aid in appropriate care and the athlete’s return to play.

**Policy Statement:**
The athletic trainer will maintain effective communication with members of the sports medicine team to ensure quality medical care as the student athlete returns to full participation.

This policy should be a living, working document, continually reviewed and updated as appropriate, as the organization and our community changes.

**Scope**
This policy applies to all parties who are associated with the medical care of student-athletes

**Site Specific Procedure**

**Injuries not requiring referral**

If an athlete sustains a minor injury that does not require additional physician or specialist referral, the athlete may return to play when he or she has full range of motion and strength and can pass sport-specific functional tests as deemed satisfactory by the Athletic Trainer. An example of some sport specific activities that can be done for RTP are:

- Lower Extremity – figure 8’s, squat jumps, single-leg hops; agility ladder, etc.

- Upper Extremity – light throwing; pushups; pull-ups; agility throwing w/medicine ball on trampoline, etc.
*The athletic trainer will make the final return to play decision.

**Injuries requiring referral**
In the case where the athlete has been referred to a physician or specialist, the return-to-play (RTP) is decided by the physician. Included on the **Physician Referral Form** (appendix 3B) is a RTP area, which the physician will need to fill out and send back to the AT with the athlete. If the physician does not complete the RTP section of the Physician Referral Form, the physician will have to provide his own RTP clearance note.

When an injury occurs, the athlete (if applicable) needs to inform the coach who will send him/her to the athletic trainer. The athletic trainer will evaluate the student-athlete and verbally inform the coach of their playing status. If the athlete is not seen by a physician, the athletic trainer will inform to the coach of the athlete’s status, and when he/she is allowed to return to play. In the case that the student athlete has been seen by a physician, the athletic trainer will wait for a signed RTP form (either on the Physician Referral Form sent by the athletic trainer or a RTP from the physician) before clearing the student-athlete to participate. **If an athlete is seen by a physician, that athlete will not be allowed to return to play until a clearance note, signed by a physician, is given to the athletic trainer.**

**Progress reports** (appendix 2B) will be filled out in Epic daily while the injured athlete is receiving treatment or rehabilitation. Coaches will be made aware of the athlete’s progress.

**Appendix**
6A. Communication Protocol for an Injured Athlete