



04 – Head Injury Reporting

Reference Documents

- WT Competition Rules and Interpretations (plus Amendments) dated 1st October 2020 – Article 18
- WT Medical Code in force as of 5th December 2019 (plus Amendments) – Appendix I
- SCAT5 – Sport Concussion Assessment Tool – 5th Edition
- The FA’s Concussion Guidelines – August 2019
- World Rugby Concussion Guidance – V3 December 2017
- GB Taekwondo Concussion Protocol

Introduction

Concussion in sports has become a very topical subject in recent years. It remains a very difficult subject to diagnose and to manage as symptoms can often be hidden or occur over time. In Taekwondo this is equally an issue which has seen the WT Rules and WT Medical Code developed and expanded in recent years.

British Taekwondo has taken a best for Member/Player approach and developed a process which it believes gives a low as reasonably practical outcome. It also recognises the first 48 hours as being key to protecting the welfare of the injured member/player.

Kicks to the Head are a part of the WT Taekwondo style and WT Competition rules. Punches to the Head are not part of the style or rules but can occur accidentally or due to foul play. Either may also occur during training for Full Contact events e.g., Training Days, Test Matches etc.

In a Class or Club training scenario (with no Head Guards) it is also inevitable that kicks or other parts of the body - such as Punches/Arms, will accidentally, make contact with the head.

Potential damage to the Head (including unconsciousness, concussion or just a hard hit) remain British Taekwondo’s biggest risk factor for any member, player or participant.

British Taekwondo is the NGB and the Member National Association for World Taekwondo (the International Federation) style Taekwondo in the UK and as such, BT is duty bound to follow WT Competition Rules and WT Medical Codes regarding Head Injuries.

However, WT Rules do not cover all scenarios of BT’s scope such as-

- They exclude Children or Pewees under 12 years
- They do not cover non-competition scenarios e.g., in Clubs/Dojangs
- Competition Training/Test Match Days are also a grey area.

British Taekwondo Member Health & Safety Guidelines

It should be noted that WT Rules and Medical Codes DO apply to all MNA Competitions and approved events under the WT Competition Rules. This includes BT sanctioned Domestic Events and BT National Events.

To ensure Head Injury Risk is kept as low as reasonably practical, British Taekwondo has taken an approach which adheres to WT Rules in WT and BT Competitive events (BT has also expanded WT Rules to include the under 12's, Clubs and Training/Test Match Days).

This has been extended, based on a best practise approach (with consideration of the Football Association, World Rugby and GB Taekwondo guidance) to cover BT Full Contact Training Events and in Club Sessions where no Head Guards are in use.

Best practice in sport guidelines also introduce the concept of 'Gradual Return to Play (GRTP)' which BT considers to also include a Gradual Return to Training.

WT Rules and Codes do not refer to any GRTP but BT has introduced this to the WT Suspension (recovery) periods to further protect the player.

BT has introduced a Head Injury Suspension & Protection Notice protocol which covers the first 48 hours of the Head Injury as being the most critical, followed the appropriate Suspension & Protection period including the GRTP timings

This is issued by BT Membership Services in conjunction with the BT Member &S Advisor.

What are Head Injuries?

In a WT competition and training a normal touch kick to a head guard will have no effect and sparring will continue without stopping, however, if any strike to the head causes a player to stop, or to stagger or to be rendered unconscious then they have sustained a 'Head Injury'.

Similarly, in a BT Class or Club, without Head Guards, a member can likewise sustain an accidental Head Injury or they may be stunned or shocked by the strike. Again, if any strike to the head causes a player to stop, or to stagger or to be rendered unconscious then they have sustained a 'Head Injury'.

Resulting injuries from a Head Injury are therefore: -

- Unconsciousness – for any length of time
- Concussion causing abnormal or unusual reactions/symptoms
- Head damage due to the blow but remain fully aware

As the NGB for WT Taekwondo we have to legislate for all types of Head Injury occurrences in the UK and include those to Children who are not covered by WT Rules/Codes.

British Taekwondo Member Health & Safety Guidelines

Where do Head injuries occur?

a) In a WT approved/recognised/sanctioned 'G ranked' Competition Event

These will be managed by WT and its Medical providers. You should obey fully the WT Medical Doctors instructions. If you are suspended from Competition under WT Rules you must comply with the suspension and you must advise BT Membership Services as soon as possible.

b) In a BT approved/recognised/sanctioned Domestic or National Competition

These will be managed by a BT Organising Committee (OC) or a local/regional/private OC. Obviously, for your own best interests, you must comply with the instructions of the OC Medical Staff.

The OC must issue you with a BT Head Injury Suspension & Protection Notice which will advise you of your next steps (e.g., visit A&E or GP and notify the correct suspension period). The Chief Referee of that event will notify BT Membership Services and your Coach of your suspension period. You must comply with this suspension period.

c) In a BT Full Contact Club Training Session or Test Match Day

These will be managed by a BT Club or Group of Clubs. Medical provision may also be as simple such as Club Coaches who are EFAW First Aider Trained. Obviously, for your own best interests, you must comply with the instructions of the First Aid/Medical provider.

The First Aider/Medic must issue you with a BT Head Injury Suspension & Protection Notice which will advise you of your next steps (e.g., visit A&E or GP and notify the suspension period). The Organiser of that event must notify BT Membership Services and your Coach of your suspension period. You must comply with this suspension period.

d) In a BT Club/Dojang or Class (With or without WT Approved Head Guards)

These will be managed by a BT Club Instructor/Coach. Medical provision may be as simple such as the Club Instructor/Coach who should be an EFAW First Aider Trained. Obviously, for your own best interests, you must comply with the instructions of the First Aider.

The First Aider must issue you with a BT Head Injury Suspension & protection Notice which will advise you of your next steps (e.g., visit A&E or GP and notify the suspension period). The Club Instructor/Coach of that Club must notify BT Membership Services of the suspension period. You must comply with this suspension period.

Note: GB Taekwondo Full Time Academy Elite Athletes

Where any head injuries occur to the full time GB Taekwondo Academy Elite Athletes (in competition or training) these will be managed by GB Taekwondo medical staff under their own GBT Head Injury/Concussion Protocols.

Note: GB Taekwondo Development Athletes

Any head injuries that occur to GB Taekwondo Development Squad Athletes will be managed jointly between GBT and BT. GBT will report any injuries to BT who will implement a Head Injury & Protection Notice which will remain in place until GBT medical staff has determined that the Athlete is recovered from any concussion symptoms. BT will then terminate the Notice.

British Taekwondo Member Health & Safety Guidelines

Recognising a Head Injury

Recognising suspected concussion	Visible signs of suspected concussion
<p>The following people should be aware and alert to possible signs of concussion (listed opposite) in Members and Players: -</p> <p>Instructors</p> <p>Coaches</p> <p>Referees</p> <p>Officials</p> <p>Family</p> <p>First Aiders/Medics</p>	<p>Where a Head kick results in a Referees 10 count</p> <p>A Head kick resulting in any 'Referee Stopped Contest' result</p> <p>Loss of consciousness or responsiveness</p> <p>Lying motionless or slow to get up</p> <p>Unsteadiness on feet</p> <p>Balance problems or falling over</p> <p>Lack of normal coordination</p> <p>Grabbing or clutching the head</p> <p>Dazed, blank or vacant look</p> <p>Confusion – not aware of situation/location/event</p>

Red Flag Symptoms of Head Injury	Visible signs
<p>If any of the symptoms opposite are noted then the injured Member/Player MUST visit A&E, GP or Medical Provider URGENTLY</p>	<p>Complaining of neck pain</p> <p>Increased confusion or irritability</p> <p>Repeated vomiting</p> <p>Seizure or convulsions</p> <p>Weakness/tingling/burning in arms or legs</p> <p>Deteriorating conscious state</p> <p>Severe or increasing headache</p> <p>Unusual behaviour changes</p> <p>Double vision</p>

WT Competition Rules and the WT Medical Code

For clarity, WT defines Head Injury Suspension Rules in both documents (which are aligned) as follows: -

WT Competition Rules and Interpretation in force as of October 1, 2020 - Article 18 - Procedure in the event of a Knock Down

2.3 - Any significant (moderate to severe) head trauma or concussion carries mandatory suspension for any competition during the suspension period (see 18.2.5 below).

This mandatory medical suspension period cannot be shortened in any circumstances once the suspension is given.

2.4 - The decision on the suspension of the contestant for significant head trauma or concussion must be made based on one of the following criteria

1. Comprehensive neurological examination and neurocognitive testing (SCAT 5 or other validated concussion-assessment tools permitted by MC Chair) performed by commissioned doctor in the venue medical room which must be reported to MC Chair)
2. Referee-stop-contest due to any loss of consciousness, altered mental status or inability to make a meaningful, stable and voluntary movement as a result of a direct head trauma at least for ten (10) seconds or by the count ten (10)
3. Failure to fully recover from head trauma and resume the match within one (1) minute of medical evaluation on the mat after centre referee calls a doctor for possible concussion.

2.5 - Any contestant who had diagnosis of significant head trauma or concussion based on none of the above criteria will get-

- 30 days suspension (Senior)
- 40 days suspension (Junior)
- 50 days suspension (Cadet)

This mandatory medical suspension period cannot be shortened in any circumstances once the suspension is given.

2.6 - Any contestant who -

- Had a second concussion in last 90 days will get 90 days suspension
- Had a third concussion in last 180 days will get 180 days suspension

World Taekwondo Medical Code (in force as of December 5, 2019) - Appendix I: B - The procedure for the management of loss of consciousness, head trauma or Knockdown

B. Any significant head trauma (any loss of consciousness or altered mental status more than 10 seconds due to concussion or moderate to severe traumatic head injury) carries mandatory suspension for any competition during the suspension period (see below for details).

This mandatory medical suspension period cannot be shortened in any circumstances once the suspension is given.

Suspension period:

- Senior athlete: 30 days
- Junior athlete: 40 days

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- *Cadet athlete: 50 days*
- *Second concussion in last 90 days: 90-day suspension*
- *Third concussion in last 180 days: 180-day suspension*

(Bi)The decision on the suspension on the athlete in competition must be made based on one of the followings:

1. *Comprehensive neurological examination and neurocognitive testing (SCAT 5 or other validated concussion-assessment tools permitted by MC Chair) performed by either CMD or OMD in the venue medical room and reported and confirmed by MC Chair.*
2. *Any knockout (any loss of consciousness or altered mental status or inability to make any meaningful, stable and voluntary movement as a result of a direct head trauma) at least for ten (10) seconds or by count ten (10) by centre referee (referee-stop-contest) shall be regarded as concussion.*
3. *Failure to fully recover from head trauma and resume the match within one (1) minute of medical evaluation on the mat after the centre referee calls a doctor for possible concussion.*

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British Taekwondo Head Injury Suspension & Protection Rules

For clarity, BT defines Head Injury Suspension Rules are applicable as follows: -

Where Head Injury Occurs	Senior 17+ Yrs.	Junior 15-16 Yrs.	Cadet 12-14 Yrs.	Child/ Peewee <12 Yrs.	2 nd Concussion in 90 Days	3 rd Concussion in 180 Days
WT 'G ranked' Events	30 Days	40 Days	50 Days	50 Days	90 Days	180 Days
BT National Events	30 Days	40 Days	50 Days	50 Days	90 Days	180 Days
BT Domestic Events	30 Days	40 Days	50 Days	50 Days	90 Days	180 Days
BT Training/ Test Match Days	30 Days	40 Days	50 Days	50 Days	90 Days	180 Days
BT Dojangs/ Clubs	30 Days	40 Days	50 Days	50 Days	90 Days	180 Days

These Suspension Periods apply to any Head contact/injury where: -

- Where a Head kick results in a Referees 10 count
- A Head kick resulting in any 'Referee Stopped Contest' result
- Failure to resume the match within one (1) minute of medical evaluation on the mat
- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Lying motionless or slow to get up
- Unsteadiness on feet
- Balance problems or falling over
- Lack of normal coordination
- Grabbing or clutching the head
- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Confusion – not aware of situation/location/event

Please note: The issue of a Head Injury Suspension & Protection Notice is final. The only challenge that will be accepted is a medical report from an approved medical/concussion specialist. Receipt of the medical report will not immediately remove any suspension period. This will be reviewed by BT's medical advisors and if acceptable then confirmed by BT in writing.

The BT Head Injury Suspension & Protection Notice

A Head Injury Suspension & Protection Notice must be issued by the Instructor/Coach/First Aider/Medic immediately following any significant head injury.

The Notice will alert the injured (or potentially injured) person/parents of potential side effects of that injury.

If the person is under 18 years, then the note must be given to their parent or guardian.

To ensure that this message has been delivered the Coach/Instructor should make a follow up call or visit within 24 hours to ensure the member is well and the parent or guardian is aware of the issue.

The Coach/Instructor should ensure that the member does not spar/compete/train again for the 48hours (even if there are no follow-on effects).

If the player/member was unconscious **for any length of time** then it is mandatory to visit a GP or A&E Department as soon as possible.

The Instructor/Coach/First Aider/Medic must make a judgement on the potential safety and health of the Member/Player based upon their best interests taking regard to their age, any ongoing symptoms and the application of the BT Head Injury Suspension & Protection Rules.

This should determine: -

- The correct overall Suspension & Protection period
- The GRTP dates
- The Return to full training date.

This information must be immediately advised to BT Membership Services to ensure they are picked up in future BT Event Audits.

Failure to adhere to the Suspension & Protection period will result in disciplinary action against the Coach and the Member

Refer to the attached BT Head Injury Suspension & Protection Notice

British Taekwondo Member Health & Safety Guidelines

Best Practise from Sport

For information the following is a guide to current WT Suspension Periods and other Best Practice guidelines from across sport:

- WT Senior Athlete/Member: 17 Years + 30 Day Suspension
- WT Junior Athlete/Member: 15 or 16 Years 40 Day Suspension
- WT Cadet Athlete/Member: 12 to 14 Years 50 Day Suspension
- Child/Pewee Athlete/Member: <12 Years Not Stated
- WT Second concussion in last 90 days: 90 Day suspension
- WT Third concussion in last 180 days: 180 Day suspension
- World Rugby Adults 7 Days rest/8 Days GRTP/Return on Day 16
- World Rugby Under 18's 14 Days rest/8 Days GRTP/Return on Day 23
- Football Association Adults 14 Days rest/4 Days GRTP/Return Day 19

Attachments

HEAD INJURY WARNING NOTES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/FAMILY - SHEETS 1 & 2

HEAD INJURY SUSPENSION & PROTECTION NOTICE – SHEETS 1 & 2

BRITISH TAEKWONDO

HEAD INJURY WARNING NOTES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/FAMILY

1

GIVE THIS NOTICE TO THE INJURED PERSON TO ALERT THEIR FAMILY OR IF UNDER 18, TO THEIR PARENT OR GUARDIAN.

IF NECESSARY, TAKE TO THE DOCTOR OR HOSPITAL AS DIRECTED BELOW

Injured Member Name	
Date of Birth / Age	/
Mobile Contact No.	
Injury Sustained	
Date and Time of Injury	
First Aid Administered	
Advice given to injured party	
Medic/Instructor/Coach	
Inst/Coach Mobile No.	
Inst/Coach Email No.	

If you were unconscious for any length of time	Visit A&E, GP or Medical provider URGENTLY
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The first 48 Hours
<p>You must not be alone for 24 Hours Do not Drive Do not drink Alcohol or take any type of recreational drugs Avoid prescription or non-prescription drugs without medical supervision – specifically: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleeping Tablets• Aspirin OR Strong Pain Killers• Anti-inflammatory medication

BRITISH TAEKWONDO

HEAD INJURY WARNING NOTES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS/FAMILY

2

Recognising suspected concussion	Visible signs of suspected concussion
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BRITISH TAEKWONDO

HEAD INJURY SUSPENSION & PROTECTION NOTICE 1

Copy To: BT Membership Services ASAP

Injured Member Name	
Date of Birth / Age	
Injury sustained	
Date of Injury	

Was the Injured Party Unconscious for any length of time?	
Did the Injured Party visit A&E or GP	
There must be 48 Hours complete rest	2 DAYS
Agreed Rest Period	
Gradual Return to Play/Training Period	8 DAYS
Medical Letter Required	
Return Day Date:	

Continual or developing symptoms of concussion can be as listed below	
Seek urgent medical attention if any of these symptoms persist or develop during the Rest, Suspension or GRTP periods	
Nervous, anxious, sad or emotional	Neck pain or tenderness
Tired/low energy/slowed down	Double vision/blurry eyes
Memory issues	Weakness/tingling in arms or legs
Pressure in head	Drowsiness, dizziness or confusion
Sensitivity to light/noise	Seizure, convulsions, twitching of face, legs/arms
Difficulty concentrating	Loss of consciousness
Bleeding from nose/ears	Nausea or vomiting
Continuing/increasing headaches	Restlessness, agitated or combative

Medic/First Aider Name:	
Instructor/Coach Name:	
Mobile No:	
Email:	
BT Club Name/Number:	
Date and Time of Report:	

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HEAD INJURY SUSPENSION & PROTECTION NOTICE 2

Copy To: BT Membership Services ASAP

It has been noted that you have sustained possible concussion through a Head Injury.

WT and BT Rules and Regulations state that you will be subject to a Suspension & Protection Period as follows: -

SUSPENSION DETAILS	AGE 17>	AGE 15-16	AGE 14-12	AGE <12	NOTES
You were Unconscious	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	If you were unconscious, you should visit A&E, GP or Medic
You CANNOT compete again today	YES/NA	YES/NA	YES/NA	YES/NA	If you have suffered suspected concussion – you CANNOT compete again today
MINIMUM TOTAL REST PERIOD: You must not be alone for 48 Hours	2 DAYS	2 DAYS	2 DAYS	2 DAYS	Must not drive, drink alcohol, take recreational drugs, take sleeping tablets, take strong pain killers or aspirin
Rest and repair period for you	20 DAYS	30 DAYS	40 DAYS	40 DAYS	No Physical activity and reduced cognitive load (e.g., TV/Reading)
You may Gradually Return to Play (GRTP) over 8 Days	8 DAYS	8 DAYS	8 DAYS	8 DAYS	2 x Light exercise x 15 mins (e.g., walk, swim, jog) 2 x Taekwondo basics x 45 mins (e.g., stretch, kicks) 2 x non-contact and resistance training 2 x Full contact/full training
SUSPENSION PERIOD	30 DAYS	40 DAYS	50 DAYS	50 DAYS	This is the total period you need to rest, repair and gradually return to play
If you were unconscious, you need a Doctors Letter before you can compete again	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	If you were unconscious then you should have proof that you are well enough to return to training

Notes:

1. If you apply to enter a BT sanctioned Event within the period of the Suspension & Protection Notice – you will fail the BT Event Audit
2. If you do take part following this failed Audit - you will risk BT disciplinary action.
3. If you do take part following this Suspension & Protection Notice – you do so against medical guidance and at your own risk and without BT insurance cover.