



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 II
- 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 – V3 April 2019

Introduction

Firstly, apologies for the long introduction, however, 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 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, 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 Rules and Medical Codes regarding Head Injuries.

However, WT Rules do not cover all scenarios of BT’s scope i.e., they exclude Children or Peepees under 12 years and they do not cover non-competition scenarios. Whether WT Rules and Codes are applicable to Competition Training is also a grey area.

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It should be noted that WT Rules and Medical Codes DO apply to all MNA Competitions and approved events under the WT Competition Rules.

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 (but is expanded to include the under 12's).

This has been extended, with 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 guidelines 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 maintained its successful Head Injury Notice protocol which covers THE FIRST 48 HOURS of the Head Injury – being the most critical. Following the first 48 hours it is the Instructor/Coaches duty to determine the appropriate suspension period and GRTP timings, advising BT Membership Services of the results.

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.

Where do Head injuries occur?

a) In a WT approved/recognised/sanctioned Competition Event

This 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 Competition Event

This 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.

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The OC must issue you with a BT Head Injury Notice which will advise you of your next steps (e.g., visit A&E or GP and notify any 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 (With WT Approved Head Guards)

This 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 Notice which will advise you of your next steps (e.g., visit A&E or GP and notify any 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 or Class (No WT Approved Head Guards)

This 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 Notice which will advise you of your next steps (e.g., visit A&E or GP and notify any suspension period). The Club Instructor/Coach of that Club must notify BT Membership Services of any suspension period which is greater than 48hours. You must comply with this suspension period.

Recognising a Head Injury

Visible Signs of Suspected Concussion:	Loss of consciousness or responsiveness Lying motionless or slow to get up Unsteady on feet Balance problems or falling over Lack of coordination Grabbing or clutching the head Dazed, blank or vacant look Confused - not aware of the situation/event
Instructors, Coaches, Referees and Officials Should recognise these signs of distress	

Red Flag Symptoms:	Athlete complains of neck pain Increasing confusion or irritability Repeated vomiting Seizure or convulsion Weakness/tingling/burning in arms or legs Deteriorating conscious state Severe or increasing headache Unusual behaviour change Double vision
If any of these symptoms show then the injured party must visit A&E/GP URGENTLY!	

British Taekwondo Member Health & Safety Guidelines

The Head Injury Warning Notice

A Head Injury Warning Notice must be issued by the Instructor/Coach 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.

After 48 hours the Coach must make a judgement for the recovery of the member/player based on their best interests, their age, any ongoing symptoms and the applicable event rules so as to determine: -

- a) **The correct suspension periods**
- b) **The GRTP dates**
- c) **The Return to full training date.**

Please see the Tables1 and 2 (below) to help make these judgements.

This information must be immediately advised to BT Membership Services to ensure they are picked up in event audits.

Failure to adhere to the suspension period will result in disciplinary action against the Coach and the Member

Table 1 - Category of Injury and the Rules that apply

Circle which process applies for your injury and event: -

Where Injury Occurred:	In WT Events	In BT Events	In BT Training Events	In BT Class / Sessions
Types of Head Injury: 1) Unconscious for any length of time 2) Suspected Concussion 3) Strong Hit to Head (No Concussion / Confusion)	Full Contact	Full Contact	Full Contact	No Headguards
	A	A	A	A
	A	B	B	B
	N/A	N/A	C	C

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Table 2 - Managing the category of Injury

Circle which Rules apply (A, B or C): -

		A	B	C
Head Injury Occurs	Day 1	0	0	0
Issue Head Injury Notice	Day 1	Yes	Yes	Yes
Urgently visit A&E or GP	Day 1-2	Yes	Monitor	Monitor
Total Rest Period:				
Must not be alone for 24 hours Do not drive Do not drink alcohol or take recreational drugs Do not take Sleeping Tablets Do not take Strong Pain Killers or Aspirin Do not take anti-inflammatory medication		2	2	2
WT or BT Suspension Period:	17 Yrs. +	Day 3 to 22	Day 3 to 22	
Rest with no physical activity	15-16 Yrs.	Day 3 to 37	Day 3 to 37	Day 3 to 15
Reduce cognitive load (TV/Reading)	<14 Yrs.	Day 3 to 52	Day 3 to 52	
Gradual Return to Play (GRTP):				
a) Light Exercise, Walk, Swim, Jog Max 15mins	2 Days	2	2	2
b) Basic TKD Movement Max 45 mins	2 Days	2	2	2
c) Non-Contact Training and Progressive Resistance Training	2 Days	2	2	2
d) Full Contact and/or Full Training	2 Days	2	2	2
Medical Approval Letter to Return	Last Day	Yes	No	No
Overall Period of Recuperation	17 Yrs. +	30 Days	30 Days	23 Days
	15-16 Yrs.	45 Days	45 Days	23 Days
	<14 Yrs.	60 Days	60 Days	23 Days
		WT Rules	WT/BT Rules	BT Rules/Best Practise
Second concussion in last 90 Days =	90 Day Suspension			
Third concussion in last 180 Days =	1 Year Suspension			

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For your 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 days
- WT Junior Athlete/Member: 15 or 16 Years 45 days
- WT Cadet Athlete/Member: 12 to 14 Years 60 days
- Child/Pewee Athlete/Member: Up to 11 Years Not Stated
- WT Second concussion in last 90 days: 90-day suspension
- WT Third concussion in last 180 days: 1-year 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
- GB Taekwondo (all ages) 14 Days rest/8Days GRPT/Return on Day 23
- Football Association Adults 14 Days rest/4 Days GRTTP/Return Day 19

BRITISH TAEKWONDO: HEAD INJURY WARNING NOTICE

GIVE THIS NOTICE TO THE INJURED PERSON OR IF UNDER 18, TO THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN

TAKE TO THE DOCTOR OR HOSPITAL AS DIRECTED BELOW

Injured Member Name	
Date of Birth / Age	/
Injury sustained	
Date and Time of Injury	
First Aid Administered at scene	
Advice given to injured party	

Unconscious for any length of time

Visit A&E / GP urgently

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: -

- Sleeping Tablets
- Aspirin OR Strong Pain Killers
- Anti-inflammatory medication

Red Flag Symptoms:

If any of these symptoms show then the injured party must visit A&E/GP URGENTLY!

Athlete complains of neck pain

Increasing confusion or irritability

Repeated vomiting

Seizure or convulsion

Weakness/tingling/burning in arms or legs

Deteriorating conscious state

Severe or increasing headache

Unusual behaviour change

Double vision

Instructor/Coach/Medic Name:

Mobile No:

Email:

BT Club Name/Number:

Date and Time of Report:

The person issuing this Head Injury Notice (above) must advise BT

Membership.Services@britishtaekwondo.org within 24 hours of the injury - stating details of the injured member (as above in grayscale) plus any suspension given.

BRITISH TAEKWONDO: HEAD INJURY RETURN TO PLAY/TRAINING

To BE AGREED WITH THE INJURED PERSON OR IF UNDER 18, THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN

AFTER THE INITIAL 48 HOURS REST PERIOD

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

Was the Injured Party Unconscious for any length of time?	YES / NO
Did the Injured Party visit A&E or GP	YES / NO
Has there been 48 Hours complete rest	2 DAYS
Agreed Rest Period	__DAYS (See Policy & Procedures Doc)
Gradual Return to Play/Training Period	8 DAYS
Medical Letter Required	YES / NO
Return Day No:	DAY NO: __

Continuing or Developing Symptoms: Seek medical advice if any of these symptoms persist or develop during the Rest, Suspension or GRTP periods	Neck pain or tenderness Double vision/Blurry eyes Weakness/tingling in arms or legs Severe or increasing headaches Drowsiness, dizziness or confusion Fits or twitching of arms, face or legs Seizure or convulsions Loss of consciousness Deteriorating conscious state Nausea or vomiting Increasingly restless, agitated or combative More emotional or sad
Nervous or anxious Tired/low energy/slowed down Difficulty remembering Pressure in head Sensitivity to light or noise Difficulty concentrating Bleeding from nose or ears Continuing Headaches	

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

The person issuing this Head Injury Return to Play/Training Notice (above) must advise BT Membership.Services@britishtaekwondo.org within 24 hours stating details of the injured member and the agreed Return to Play/Training Plan (as above in grayscale)

Note:

1. If you apply to enter a BT sanctioned Event within the period of the Suspension 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 – you do so against medical guidance and at your own risk

BRITISH TAEKWONDO: HEAD INJURY SUSPENSION NOTICE

Today you have today received a Head Injury in a BT Sanctioned Event. World Taekwondo Rules and Regulations state that you will be subject to a Suspension Period as follows: -

Suspension Details	AGE 17+	AGE 15-16	AGE <14	NOTES
You were Unconscious	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	
You CANNOT compete again today	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	
You must not be alone for 48 Hours	2 DAYS	2 DAYS	2 DAYS	Must not drive, drink alcohol, take recreational drugs, take sleeping tablets, take strong pain killers or aspirin
You must rest for	20 DAYS	35 DAYS	50 DAYS	No Physical activity and reduced cognitive load (e.g., TV/Reading)
You may gradually Return to play over 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
TOTAL SUSPENSION PERIOD	30 DAYS	45 DAYS	60 DAYS	
If you were unconscious, you need a Doctors Letter before you can compete again	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	

EVENT DOCTOR TO CIRCLE AS ABOVE SUBJECT TO INJURY AND AGE.

COPY TO COMPETITOR/COACH AND COPY TO EVENT CHIEF REFEREE