

CONCUSSION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Mountain Biking inherently comes with the risk of serious injury, including head injury and concussion. As concussions cannot completely be prevented, it is the club's responsibility that riders who have sustained a concussion are sat out after the concussion occurred and directed to appropriate follow up to reduce the risk of long-term consequences. With appropriate follow up care, nearly all concussions have a good outcome.

This concussion policy describes the framework of how the club will manage a rider that has sustained a suspected concussion. The policy is based on the Auscycling Concussion Policy 2020 and the Australian Institute of Sport "Australian Concussion Guidelines for Youth and Community Sport" 2024. Both sources, as well as this policy, are intended to support the rider in their safe return to sport and to reduce the risk of long-term consequences.

2. PREPARATION

2.1 Concussion officer

The club will nominate a concussion officer who will be the single point of contact for the rider, their health professionals, the club and Auscycling during the recovery phase after the concussion. The concussion officer is not responsible for treating the rider or to make medical decisions. Their role is to coordinate matters related to concussion and ensure that the club's protocols are followed.

The concussion officer can be contacted via email: concussion@cairnsmtb.com

2.2 Training of club volunteers

As part of preparation for events, in particular races, the club will organise first aid training and concussion recognition training for a reasonable number of regular volunteers including Race Directors and Marshals.

2.3 Race Day

All Marshal packs will have a checklist containing signs and symptoms of concussion. At the first aid station appropriate concussion recognition tools for healthcare practitioners and non-healthcare practitioners will be available.

An appropriate amount of information packets for riders who have suspected or diagnosed concussion will be available. These packets will contain:

- Information about the concussion process of the club
- Contact details of the Concussion Officer
- Options of Healthcare Practitioner to see for follow up
- Information about the Graded Return to Sport/School/Work Framework
- AIS Concussion Referral & Return Form

The club also will provide information material for the person providing First Aid for the race (Non-Healthcare Practitioner and Healthcare Practitioner).

2.4 Athlete preparation

The club will organise at least one in person information session pre-season.

For riders who are not able to attend, the club will provide a link to online education material on their website and on the booking system for races. At the races this educational material will be available for athletes who did not review the material prior to race day.

Any rider competing in a race will have to confirm that they have familiarised themselves with the material provided.

For riders under the age of 18 competing in a race, the club will require a signed statement from the rider and their legal guardian that they both have familiarised themselves with the material provided. If the signed form is not present at the rider's first race of the season a confirmation by phone with the legal guardian of the rider might be acceptable at the discretion of the Race Director.

3. RACE DAY

3.1 Briefing

As part of the Marshals' briefing about emergency procedure they will be asked to review the concussion recognition material provided in the Marshal packs

3.2 Notification of Race Director

When a Marshal or any other person has the suspicion of a rider having sustained a concussion, they notify the Race Director. Based on the information provided, the Race Director will decide if the rider requires a concussion assessment. After the assessment, the Race Director will be notified if there is suspicion of concussion. If there is suspicion of concussion, the rider will immediately be suspended from racing and will not be allowed to return to racing until a signed AIS Concussion Referral & Return Form is provided to the Concussion Officer.

3.3 Assessment

3.3.1 NON-Healthcare Provider:

If the person is not a Healthcare Provider who is trained in SCAT6 assessment the AIS "Non-Healthcare Practitioner On Field Concussion Recognition Decision Tree" will be followed.

3.3.2 Healthcare Practitioner

If the person is an appropriately trained Healthcare Practitioner, the AIS “Healthcare Practitioner On-Field Concussion Management Decision Tree” will be followed.

3.4 Refusal of consenting to assessment

Should a rider refuse to get assessed, they will be immediately suspended from racing for that day and for a further four weeks. This will be notified to Auscycling in an incident report. Should the rider subsequently attend follow up by an appropriately trained healthcare practitioner (as defined by the AIS) and provide a signed AIS Concussion Referral & Return Form to the Concussion Officer the suspension will appropriately be revoked.

3.4 Structural damage of helmet

Should the helmet of a rider who has been referred for concussion assessment display signs of structural damage the rider will be deemed to have suspicion of concussion and will have to undergo the return to racing process.

3.5 Notifications

3.4.1 If there is the suspicion of a rider having sustained concussion during a race the Race Director will write an incident report to Auscycling as required by Auscycling.

3.4.2 If the Concussion Officer is not involved with the process during the race, the Race Director will inform the Concussion Officer of the suspicion of concussion. The Concussion Officer will contact the rider to assist with follow up. Once a satisfactory AIS Concussion Referral & Return Form is received by the Concussion Officer, they will notify Auscycling about the outcome to cancel the suspension.

3.4.3 If a rider sustains a concussion outside a Cairns MTB Club race and the club becomes aware of this, the same return to racing process will need to be followed. It is suggested that club members contact the Concussion Officer.

4. RETURN TO RACING

Once the Concussion Officer has received a satisfactory AIS Concussion Referral & Return Form, they will notify Auscycling as well as the respective Race Director. This will clear the rider to partake in races again.

5. DISCLAIMER

This policy is closely based on the Auscycling Concussion Policy 2020 and the Australian Institute of Sport “Australian Concussion Guidelines for Youth and Community Sport” 2024 including wording, parts of or whole sentences.

6. REFERENCES

- Australian Institute of Sport: Australian Concussion Guidelines for Youth and Community Sport, February 2024
- www.concussioninsport.gov.au
- [Auscycling: Concussion Policy, Version 1.0, 6 July 2020](#)