

Additional permanent "concussion substitutes"

Protocol A

- One "concussion substitute" per team
- No additional substitute for the opposing team

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Principles

- Each team is permitted to use a maximum of one “concussion substitute” in a match.
- A “concussion substitution” may be made regardless of the number of substitutes already used.
- In competitions in which the number of named substitutes is the same as the maximum number of “normal” substitutes that can be used, the “concussion substitute” can be a player who has previously been substituted and who may be used at any time, regardless of the number of substitutes already used.

Procedure

- The substitution procedure operates in accordance with Law 3 – The Players (*except as outlined otherwise below*).
- A “concussion substitution” may be made:
 - immediately after a concussion occurs or is suspected;
 - after an on-field assessment, and/or after an off-field assessment; or
 - at any other time when a concussion occurs or is suspected (including when a player has previously been assessed and has returned to the field of play).
- If a team decides to make a “concussion substitution”, the referee/fourth official is informed, ideally by using a substitution card/form of a different colour.
- The injured player is not permitted to take any further part in the match (including kicks from the penalty mark) and should, where possible, be accompanied to the changing room and/or a medical facility.

Substitution opportunities

- Making a “concussion substitution” is separate from any limit on the number of “normal” substitution opportunities.
- However, if a team makes a “normal” substitution at the same time as a “concussion substitution”, this will count as one of its “normal” substitution opportunities.
- Once a team has used all its “normal” substitution opportunities, it cannot use a “concussion substitution” opportunity to make a “normal” substitution.

Match officials

The referee (and other match officials; especially the fourth official):

- is not part of the team's decision-making process as to whether a player should be substituted or not, nor whether a player should be replaced by a “normal” substitute or a “concussion substitute”.
- must not decide whether an actual or suspected injury qualifies for a “concussion substitute” to be used.
- should give appropriate support where a player has an actual or suspected injury, including informing the team captain/coach/medical staff if they suspect a player needs assessment/treatment.
- should support a decision by the team captain/coach/medical staff that an injured player must not continue playing; this may require the referee to delay the restart of play until the player has left the field of play.
- must inform the appropriate authorities if a concern is expressed that a “concussion substitute” was potentially used incorrectly.