



# **PLAYHQ CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONALITY**

**PLAYER / PROFILE OWNER GUIDE**

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## Contents

<b>1. What is Concussion .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Overview of PlayHQ concussion management functionality.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Entering a suspected concussion.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Submitting a clearance to return to play .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Verifying a medical clearance (if seeking to return before 21 days) .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – Email notifications.....</b>	<b>11</b>

## 1. What is Concussion

**Concussion is a brain injury.** It can happen when players get a head knock, a bump or an impact to the body that sends force to the head. In footy it could be from a tackle, a mark or even a bad landing or fall. Basically, it's a short-term change in how the brain works. For a little while, it takes more energy for the nerves to talk to each other. And you don't need to be knocked out to have a concussion. In fact, most concussions happen without the person losing consciousness.

**Spotting a suspected concussion is key.** A suspected concussion is a head knock or impact to the body that sends force to the head plus signs or symptoms afterwards. But here's where it gets tricky – concussion signs and symptoms aren't always obvious. Players might feel fine right after a knock, but symptoms can show up hours or even up to a few days later. Remember: if in doubt, sit it out.

**Recovery is crucial, and is different for everyone.** The good news is most players make a full recovery from concussions. But they need to give their brain time to heal. Just like with a sprained ankle, they can't rush back into play. Kick off recovery by seeing a doctor, and following the AFL Guidelines for [Graded Return to Play](#). Take it slow and steady, building up their confidence as symptoms improve. And then it's back to playing the game we love!

Remember, concussions can happen at any level of play. Whether you're a parent or a player, speak out if you see something that worries you. Sitting isn't quitting!

Learn more at the [AFL Play Concussion Hub](#).

## **2. Overview of PlayHQ concussion management functionality**

The PlayHQ concussion management functionality includes the ability to enter suspected concussions which makes players ineligible for selection and triggers email notifications. The functionality requires that the PlayHQ profile owner (i.e. player or parent / guardian) make various declarations as part of their clearance to return to play. This guide provides a step-by-step overview on how to enter a suspected concussion and the steps required for clearance to return to play.

### 3. Entering a suspected concussion

A suspected concussion can be entered by:

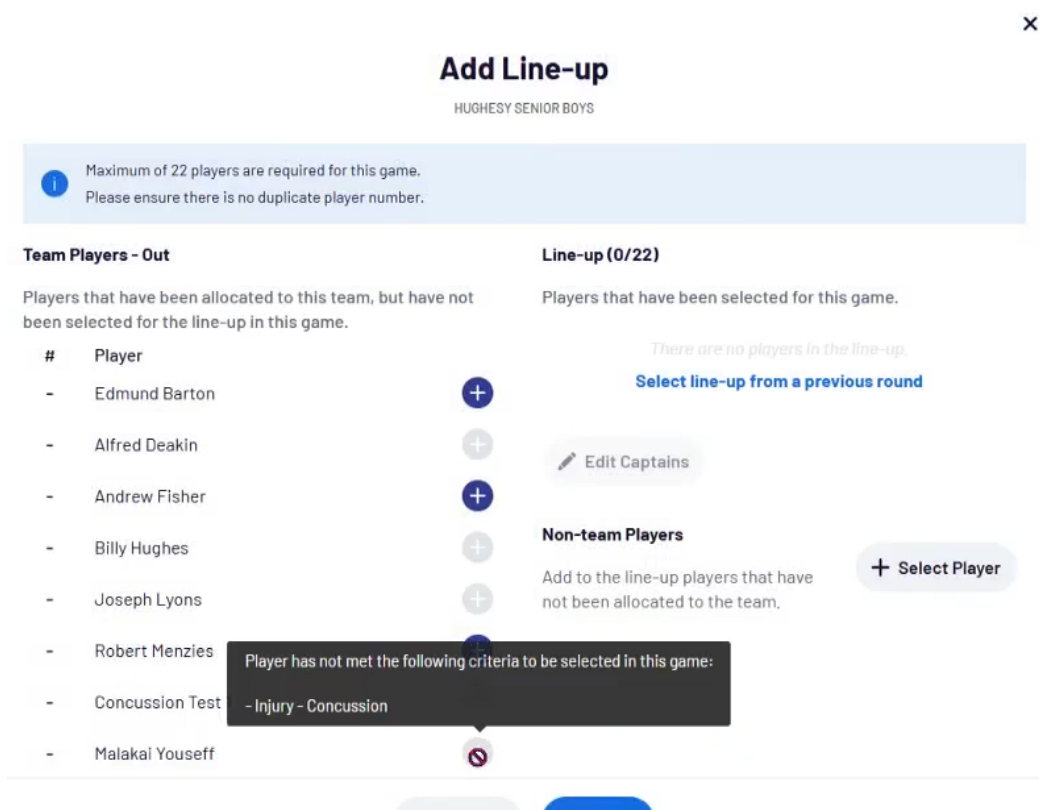
- a) Team Manager or Club administrators
- b) League administrators and above

A suspected concussion can be entered in relation to a match or non-match related incident (e.g. an incident at training or an incident outside football).

When a suspected concussion is entered:

- a) A player is automatically marked as ineligible for selection in line-ups until they successfully complete the steps required for clearance to return to play.
- b) The participant/profile owner will be notified of the suspected concussion via email and provided details on the process they must follow to safely return to play following a suspected concussion.
- c) The team manager and relevant club administrators will be able to see this concussion record. (Note: once the player has been cleared to return from the suspected concussion, the concussion record will only be visible to the participant/profile owner.)

Once a suspected concussion is entered, the player is automatically marked as ineligible for selection in line-ups until they successfully complete the steps required for clearance to return to play. See example of a player being ineligible for selection due to a concussion:



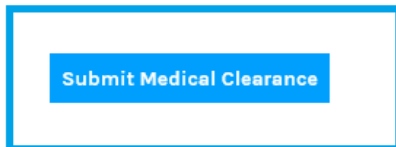
## 4. Submitting a clearance to return to play

Only a player (or profile owner on the player's behalf) can submit a clearance to return to play.

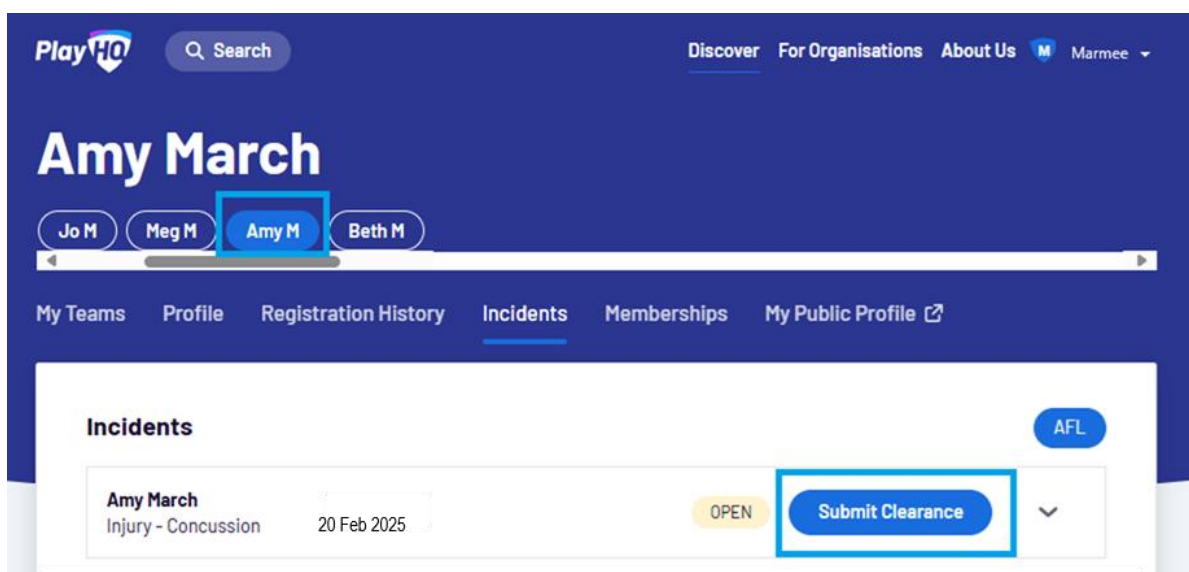
You (the player or profile owner) will be notified via email that a suspected concussion has been entered and that you are ineligible for selection in games. That email will also advise you of the steps to complete to return to play. Once you are ready to submit to return to play, you need to follow these steps:

- a) Navigate through to the **Clearance to Return to Play** page by either:
  - i. Clicking to **Submit Medical Clearance** via the email notification they received.

If a medical doctor determines that the player did not suffer a concussion, the player must provide a medical report and clearance to their club. It is vital that players are honest in outlining to their doctor the reasons for the suspected concussion and any signs / symptoms. Where a player has been cleared of having suffered a concussion, they may submit to clear themselves via their PlayHQ profile. In these circumstances their team manager or club administrator must confirm via PlayHQ that they have sighted the medical clearance for the player to then be cleared and eligible for selection on a team sheet.



- ii. Logging into playhq.com and navigate to **My Account > Incidents**, and click **Submit Clearance**



- b) Enter the proposed **Return Date** to return to play, provide your registered medical GP / Doctor name, Medical Centre Address and Contact Number and then confirm compliance with the relevant return to play steps and click **Submit Clearance**.

**20 Feb 2025 (Injury - Concussion Incident)**

Review and submit your clearance to return to play. Please submit the date which you are proposing to return to play.

Return Date\*

25/04/2025 

GP/Doctor Name\*

Please enter

Provider Number

Please enter

Medical Centre Address\*

Please enter

Medical Centre Contact Number\*

Please enter

- I / player have successfully completed the stages of the graded return to play and have remained symptom free throughout the graded loading program
- I / player have obtained a clearance to return to play (from a registered medical doctor) to return to full contact training / playing
- I / player feel confident to return to play
- I / player understand that I may be required to show my team manager or a club administrator my clearance to return to play

Please note that if you are seeking to return to play immediately (i.e. a doctor has cleared you of having suffered a concussion), you will follow the same process, however, you will be asked to confirm compliance with an alternate list of relevant return to play steps.

In this scenario, your Club will also need to confirm they have sighted the medical clearance before you are eligible for selection (see section 5).

Once a clearance to return to play has been submitted, you, your Team Manager and relevant Club Administrators will be notified via email.

The Incident status will update from **OPEN** to either:

- a) **NEEDS REVIEW** (if you are seeking to return before 21 days) – in this scenario, a Team Manager or Club Administrator must confirm via PlayHQ that they have sighted the medical clearance before a player can be selected in a team sheet.

- b) **PENDING** (if you are seeking to return after 21+ days) – in this scenario, no further action is needed, and the incident will automatically close on the player’s return to play date and the player will be eligible for selection.

Note: for player privacy, once a concussion incident has closed and after the return to play date, the incident will disappear from the incident list.

## 5. Verifying a medical clearance (if seeking to return before 21 days)

If you submit a clearance and your **Return to Play Date** is **less than 21 days** from the incident, a Team Manager or Club Administrator must **review and verify that they have sighted the medical clearance for the player via PlayHQ** before you become eligible for selection on a team sheet. This scenario should only occur when a medical doctor has assessed a player and confirms that no concussion was sustained.

Steps for a Team Manager or Club Administrator to review and verify the clearance request and close the incident on PlayHQ are provided in the Team Manager or Club Administrator Guide.

Note: Once complete and for player privacy, this incident will disappear from the incident list after the return to play date.

## 6. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **What happens once a player has been recorded as having a suspected concussion?**

Once a suspected concussion incident is entered, a player is automatically marked as ineligible for selection in line-ups until they successfully complete the steps required for clearance to return to play.

Team Managers and Club Administrators can view concussion incidents via the **incidents** list in the **Admin Portal** and **My Teams**.

### **How does a player request a clearance to return to play?**

As per section 4, once you are ready to submit to return to play, you need to navigate through to the **Clearance to Return to Play** page by either (a) clicking to **Submit Medical Clearance** via the email notification they received or (b) logging into playhq.com and navigating to **My Account > Incidents** and clicking **Submit Clearance**.

You will then be prompted to enter your proposed **Return Date**, the registered medical GP / Doctor name (along with Medical Centre Address and Contact Number) where you received your medical clearance and confirm you have completed various steps as part of a safe return to play prior to clicking **Submit Clearance**.

If you are seeking to return to play immediately (i.e. a doctor has cleared them of having suffered a concussion), your Club will also need to confirm they have sighted the medical clearance before you are eligible for selection (see section 5).

### **My medical doctor / GP cleared me of a concussion, but my Coach can't select me on a team sheet. What should I do?**

If a medical doctor / GP determines that a player did not suffer a concussion, the player must submit a clearance and their Club will need to confirm via PlayHQ that they have sighted the medical clearance for the player to then be cleared and eligible for selection on a team sheet.

### **Can concussion incidents be edited or deleted?**

Team Managers and Club Administrator can edit a concussion incident date, or incident description, or delete the incident altogether (if accidentally created). Edits must be made within 7 days of the incident date and must be made prior to the player requesting a clearance to return to play.

### **Can a concussion incident be viewed after a player returns to play?**

For privacy reasons, Team Managers and Club Administrators will be unable to view a player's concussion incident history, after they are cleared to return to play. Only the profile owner can view historic concussion incidents in their Account Details, under the incidents tab.

### **Our Coach or Captain enters team line-ups – can they record a suspected concussion incident?**

No – only Team Managers and Club Administrators can create and manage suspected concussion incidents. If a team does not have an assigned Team Manager with Management Access, please contact a Club Administrator with Admin Portal access, to record a suspected concussion incident.

## Appendix 1 – Email notifications

### 1. Copy of ‘Suspected Concussion’ email sent to Player/Profile Owner:

A suspected concussion has been submitted for [Player] who is now ineligible to be selected to a team sheet until they successfully complete the stages of graded return to play and are cleared to return by a registered medical doctor.

#### **What does a player with a concussion need to do to safely return to play?**

ALL players with a suspected concussion should seek a prompt medical assessment (with a registered medical doctor). After a concussion, players need to take it easy to start, then gradually get more active.

Remember, the return to play process is different for everyone, and it takes at least three weeks to progress through the different stages.

For more information on the stages of return to play, visit [Play.AFL](#)

#### **What is required for clearance to return following a concussion (and to be eligible to be selected on a team sheet)?**

The earliest that a player may return to play following a concussion (once they have completed a graded loading program and have obtained medical clearance) is on the 21st day following the concussion.

Players must have completed the following:

- i) Successfully completed the stages of the graded return to play and have remained symptom free throughout the graded loading program
- ii) Obtained a medical clearance (from a registered medical doctor) to return to full contact training / playing
- iii) Feel confident to return to play

Once players have completed the above, this can be declared via their PlayHQ profile for them to become eligible for selection on a team sheet.

If a medical doctor determines that the player did not suffer a concussion, the player must provide a medical report and clearance to their club. It is vital that players are honest in outlining to their doctor the reasons for the suspected concussion and any signs / symptoms. Where a player has been cleared of having suffered a concussion, they may submit to clear themselves via their PlayHQ profile. In these circumstances their team manager or club administrator must confirm via PlayHQ that they have sighted the medical clearance for the player to then be cleared and eligible for selection on a team sheet.

Submit Medical Clearance

Click this box to link from the email to your  
account profile

## 2. Copy of email 'medically reviewed and did not sustain a concussion'

[Player] has submitted to return to play and be eligible for selection on a team sheet. That submission includes confirmation that they have received a medical clearance from a registered medical doctor that outlines that they **did not sustain a concussion**.

A team manager or club administrator will need to confirm via PlayHQ that they have sighted the medical clearance for the player for them to be eligible for selection on a team sheet.

The team manager and relevant club administrators have been notified accordingly.

## 3. Copy of email 'cleared to return from concussion'

[Player] has submitted a clearance to return to play and be eligible for selection on a team sheet. That submission includes confirmation that they:

1. Have successfully completed the stages of the graded return to play and have remained symptom free throughout the graded loading program
2. Have obtained a medical clearance (from a registered medical doctor) to return to full contact training / playing
3. Feel confident to return to play

[Player's] return-to-play date is: 05/04/2025 and the team manager and relevant club administrators have been notified accordingly.

This concussion record on the Player's PlayHQ profile will only be visible to the PlayHQ profile owner beyond that return to play date.