GREATER MONCTON

GMFA

FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Safety-Leadership-Teamwork

HELMET REMOVAL PROTOCOL

Helmet Removal Protocol

General Guidelines

- Any athlete suspected of having a spinal injury should not be moved and should be managed as though a spinal injury exists;
- The athlete's airway, breathing and circulation, neurological status and level of consciousness should be assessed;
- The athlete should not be moved unless absolutely essential to maintain airway, breathing and circulation;
- If the athlete must be moved to maintain airway, breathing and circulation, the athlete should be placed in a supine position while maintaining spinal immobilization;
- When moving a suspected spine injured athlete, the head and trunk should be moved as a unit. One accepted technique is to manually splint the heat to the trunk; and
- The Emergency Action Plan should be activated – CALL 9-1-1 immediately.

Face Mask Removal

- The face mask should be removed with a cordless screwdriver prior to transportation, regardless of current respiratory status.
- Those involved in the pre-hospital care of injured football players should have the tools (cordless screw driver) for facemask removal readily available.

Football Helmet Removal Guidelines

The helmet and chinstrap should only be removed:

- If the helmet and chin strap to not hold the head securely, such that immobilization of the helmet does not also immobilize the head;
- If the design of the helmet and chin strap is such that even after removal of the face mask, the airway cannot be controlled, or ventilation be provided;
- If the face mask cannot be removed after a reasonable period of time; or
- If the helmet prevents immobilization for transportation in an appropriate position.

Helmet Removal **Spinal immobilization must be maintained while removing the helmet**

- Helmet removal should be frequently practiced under proper supervision;
- Specific guidelines for helmet removal need to be developed
- In most circumstances, it may be helpful to remove cheek padding and/or deflate air padding prior to helmet removal.

Equipment **Appropriate spinal alignment must be maintained**

- There needs to be a realization that the helmet and shoulder pads elevate an athlete's trunk when in a supine position;
- Should either be removed, or if only one is present, appropriate spinal alignment must be maintained;
- The front of the shoulder pads can be opened to allow access for CPR and defibrillation if required.

*****All providers of pre-hospital care should practice and be competent in these skills before they are needed in an emergency situation*****