

CLIENT NEWS BRIEF

New Law Limits Full-Contact Football Practices and Adds Requirements in Order for Student-Athletes With Head Injuries to Return to Sport Participation

Governor Brown recently signed into law Assembly Bill (AB) 2127, which limits the duration and amount of “full-contact” practices for middle school and high school football teams and adds a “graduated return-to play protocol” for student-athletes that have sustained a concussion or head injury. These changes will take effect on January 1, 2015.

AB 2127 adds Education Code section 35179.5, which will prohibit high school and middle school football teams from conducting more than two “full-contact” practices per week during the preseason and regular season. The full-contact portions of a practice cannot exceed 90 minutes in any single day. High school and middle school football teams will also be prohibited from holding any full-contact practices during the off-season. The law defines “full-contact practice” as “a practice where drills or live action is conducted that involves collisions at game speed, where players execute tackles and other activity that is typical of an actual tackle football game.”

AB 2127 also amends Education Code section 49475 to include a new requirement for student-athletes that have sustained a concussion or head injury. Current law requires student-athletes to be removed from sport participation for the remainder of the day if they are suspected to have sustained a concussion or head injury. Student-athletes may not participate again until they are evaluated by a “licensed health care provider” and receive written clearance. Current law also requires the student-athlete and his or her parent to sign and submit a concussion and head injury information sheet before returning to practice or competition.

While these requirements remain in effect, AB 2127 now requires that student-athletes determined to have sustained a concussion or head injury by a licensed health care provider “complete a graduated return-to-play protocol of no less than seven days under the supervision of a licensed health care provider.” For purposes of Education Code section 49475, AB 2127 defines “licensed health care provider” as a licensed health care provider who is trained in the management of concussions and is acting within the scope of his or her practice. AB 2127 also urges the California Interscholastic Federation to work with the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine to adopt rules and protocols to implement this law.

Underpinning AB 2127 are legislative findings on the underreporting of concussions and head injuries, the potential long-term brain damage from concussions and head injuries, and the importance of recovery and rehabilitation. Districts should ensure athletic departments, athletic directors, coaches and other relevant staff are aware of these new laws and understand the importance of reporting concussions and head injuries to avoid student injury and liability.

Lozano Smith offers a Coaching Manual, which includes legal guidelines and practical suggestions to assist school districts in hiring and supervising athletic coaches. The Coaching Manual provides ready-to-use forms and contracts

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designed to save future costs. Please [click here](#) for more information. If you have any questions regarding AB 2127 or other issues related to athletics or extra-curricular activities, please contact one of our [eight offices](#) located statewide. You can also visit our [website](#), follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#), or download our [Client News Brief App](#).

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