



Dear Parents and Players of the Waterloo Region Predators;

To provide the best medical care for your child on the field, the Waterloo Region Minor Football Association has engaged Guelph Performance Therapy to provide onsite Athletic Therapy services. A Certified Athletic Therapist or Student Therapist who will be present at every practice and game throughout the season. Every therapist is a trained First Responder, and can care for emergency conditions as they arise. The therapists are also there to provide early intervention to minor injuries and can assess injuries and provide advice on treatment, exercises, and stretches to prevent long-term injury. The qualifications required to be a therapist with the Predators greatly exceed the minimum requirements set by Football Canada.

One injury that we are constantly aware of is concussion. Each therapist is trained in the most up-to-date protocol for recognition and monitoring of sports related concussions. Concussions can present themselves in very different ways, and they don't always look the same, even in the same person.

Every player with the Waterloo Region spring program *must* undergo a baseline test prior to participating in contact practice. The baseline is a tool to help identify concussions, and more importantly, identify when a player has fully recovered from a concussion. Without a baseline, therapists must err even more on the side of caution, which could result in even more playing time lost unnecessarily.

To ensure that a player is ready to return to practice following a concussion or head injury, we often require a note from a **Sports Medicine Physician** indicating that it is safe for the player to return to full contact football. The player must also complete a stepwise return to play protocol, during practices, monitored by our team therapists. Often this means attending practice even before receiving clearance for full participation to complete the return to play steps. This protocol is to keep your child safe and able to continue playing sports in the future. Should your child sustain a concussion, please discuss the protocol with your team's therapist to ensure that no steps are missed or delayed!

While family doctors, chiropractors, physiotherapists and athletic therapists are great tools to aid in the guidance and recovery of your child's injury, the Waterloo Region Predators, and Guelph Performance Therapy require a sign off from a Sports Medicine Physician for liability reasons, unless your therapist specifically tells you otherwise. The therapist will give plenty of direction to help navigate this process in the case of your son or daughter's injury.

My name is Alana Gulka and I organize the therapy coverage throughout the season. If you have any questions about your child's injury, or about what Athletic Therapists do for the Preds teams, please feel free to ask your child's therapist at the field or get in touch with me and I'd be happy to help.

Here's to a happy, safe and successful 2018 season!

Alana Gulka CAT(C) RMT  
Certified Athletic therapist  
Registered Massage Therapist

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