Concussion policy

 **Safety first**

Gravity Canterbury is focused on keeping riders safe, while recognising that downhill mountain biking has its inherent dangers that are part of the appeal of the sport. Broken bones can be fixed, but a brain injury can have long-term effects which may be with you for the rest of your life. C

**Definition**

Concussion, also known as a traumatic brain injury, occurs when the brain sustains an impact. The effects are cumulative, so several smaller impacts over a relatively short period of time can lead to serious consequences, Many people do not realize that the impact can be to the body and not to the head directly, and also that loss of consciousness only occurs in 20% of those who are subsequently diagnosed with concussion.

**Symptoms**

The symptoms of concussion can range from problems with your vision, energy, balance and co-ordination, energy levels, memory, and concentration. The symptoms may take several hours or days to develop. The adolescent brain is more susceptible to concussion than the adult brain.

**Club policy**

1. You must declare a previous concussion on your club membership form and race entry forms if you have a concussion during the season.
2. Medical clearance to race is recommended for riders with a history of concussion, especially if recent.
3. At all club events and races you are strongly recommended to wear a neck brace and you must wear an undamaged full face helmet.
4. If you have a crash on a race day the ambulance staff will make an assessment (based on the SCAT 3 Concussion Assessment Tool), and if they consider that concussion is possible you will not be able to continue racing on that day (including sweeping or other riding).
5. It is strongly recommended that you see a doctor for clearance. Often a graduated return to sport is needed after a concussion.
6. While it will be disappointing to be pulled from a competition, in your long term interests of riders’ health, these conditions will be strictly enforced.

References:

* [ACC Sport Concussion National Guidelines January 2015](http://www.acc.co.nz/PRD_EXT_CSMP/groups/external_ip/documents/publications_promotion/wpc137332.pdf)
* [SCAT 3 Sport Concussion Assessment Tool, 3rd Edition](http://bjsm.bmj.com/content/47/5/259.full.pdf)

October 2015