

Identifying, dealing with concussion

By Jim Cornelius
News Editor

While the focus on concussions generally revolves around youth sports, concussions can happen anywhere. A kid — or an adult — can get a concussion falling on the ski slopes; crashing a bike; or slipping on ice on the driveway. Any blow to the head — or even a severe jolt to the body — can rock the brain and cause injury.

Signs and symptoms of a concussion may include:

- Headache or a feeling of pressure in the head
- Temporary loss of consciousness
- Confusion or feeling as if in a fog
- Amnesia surrounding the traumatic event
- Dizziness or seeing stars
- Ringing in the ears
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Delayed response to questions
- Appearing dazed
- Fatigue

Some symptoms of concussions may be immediate or delayed in onset by hours or days after injury, such as:

- Concentration and memory complaints
- Irritability and other personality changes
- Sensitivity to light and noise
- Sleep disturbances

- Psychological adjustment problems and depression
- Disorders of taste and smell

Information from The Mayo Clinic

Sisters High School nurse Trish Roy cannot diagnose concussion. When she recognizes the symptoms, she recommends that parents get medical attention for their injured child. And if symptoms are lasting, “We really encourage them to see a concussion specialist.”

Cort Horner and his family have been dealing with long-term concussion impacts involving their son Ty. Now a high school freshman, Ty suffered a concussion in 8th-grade football. In consulting with a neurologist, they tracked Ty’s active history back and identified other instances of concussion.

Multiple concussions (and sometimes single concussions) can trigger effects that are slow to evolve, difficult to pinpoint exactly and take time and work to address.

“It took time to see what was going on with Ty,” Horner told *The Nugget*. He said Ty was “a little more emotional. Definitely saw symptoms that people would attribute to ADD.”

Process-oriented thought — *this step follows that step* — seemed to be challenging.

“Math was very difficult, all of a sudden,” Horner said.

Ty’s condition required accommodations in the classroom — with mixed results, according to Cort. Ty is now in school at West Linn, where his family feels his needs can be better met (*see related story, page 8*).

Horner notes that — tough as it is with kids — it’s important when a child has a brain injury to “keep them away from digital stimulation.” He noted that Ty would develop headaches after screen time. Rest of the brain is critical to recovery.

Such a situation is, obviously, very frustrating for a young person and tough on his or her parents. Elite Sisters skier Jenna Sneva suffered debilitating post-concussion symptoms in college that changed her life completely — and led to her advocacy for Jenna’s Law, which extends concussion training requirements to non-school youth sports coaches (*see links to Sneva’s story accompanying the online version of this story*). Other Sisters parents are struggling with serious post-concussion issues now.

But Horner emphasizes that time, rest, accommodation and work with professionals offers plenty of hope for people struggling with lingering post-concussion effects.

“What is hopeful is it’s *not* permanent,” he said. “It’s retraining your brain.”

Alpine skiers place well in Giant Slalom

With fresh snow on the slopes of Mt. Bachelor, the Sisters Alpine Ski Team endured full winter conditions for their third race of the 2016 season.

Team co-captains and seniors Cammi Benson and Betsy Ausman placed 10th and 12th respectively out of 53 women racers from across the state.

“The girls field is really competitive this year. These are the top female racers in the state, and many of them compete nationally. So placing 10th and 12th is a huge accomplishment,” said Head Coach Greg Ausman.

Sisters sophomore Holland Hartman moved up in the ranking this race to 35th.

“Holland is learning race techniques quickly, and her placings are improving every race,” said Coach Ausman.

Rounding out the women’s team for this race is new member Shae Gascon.

“Shae came out of the starting gate very aggressively on her first run, missed some gates, and learned it’s better to stay in control and pace yourself. She did much better on her second run,” said Coach Ausman.

Representing the men’s team, Lachlan Wood placed 33rd overall, and John Banks close behind placing 35th out of 52 competitors.

Next week the ski teams will be racing on a slalom course at Mt. Bachelor.



PHOTO BY JULIE BENSON

Holland Hartman takes a gate in giant slalom.

WHY ADVERTISE WITH A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER?

Community newspapers are read by a majority of the community

67%
of adults read community newspapers each week

Most readers turn to their community newspaper for news before turning to other media.

70%
of those readers read most or all of their paper

2013 Community Newspaper Readership Survey

Based on a nationwide telephone survey of adults in markets served by newspapers of 15,000 or less circulation, NNA examined the relationship between Main Street America and its newspapers.

Center for Advanced Social Research | Reynolds Journalism Institute | The Missouri School of Journalism