

Supplemental Table 1. Community Australian Football player views on the advantages/disadvantages of the concussion guidelines

(n=18)

Major themes	Sub-themes	Example quote
Advantages of following the concussion guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights the seriousness of concussion 	<i>Helps you so that you don't get further or more seriously concussed... They don't chuck you in the game too quickly again.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes the culture around playing with concussion, putting player welfare first 	<i>I reckon we've sort of grown up. ... Everyone sort of idolises those situations like, where a player's taken a big knock and shown courage to come back on. I think a lot of that sort of happened before these guidelines.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a consistent approach to diagnosing and managing concussion 	<i>Yeah ... just make it the same rule for everyone no matter how severe the concussion is ...they're the same guidelines that affect everyone. It's not ...a different trainer, saying their opinion on each different player. There's just one guideline that affects everyone.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the pressure on players to return to play and shifts the decision making responsibility away from players 	<p><i>I think it's a very good thing. It takes the decision out of your hands... So the call's not up to you whether you go back out there or not. It's up to the people that are around you. Like I don't know, if a few years ago someone got knocked out, they'd say, "No, I'm right to go". Nowadays, if someone says you can't come back on the ground, you're not going to come back on the ground.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the pressure that players place on each other to return to play 	<p><i>...it lets their team mates know that, you know, they weren't right to go. You don't get stuck into them because they're not coming back on the ground sort of thing.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instills a sense of responsibility in coaches and officials 	<p><i>I think the officials will say in the back of their head, "His wellbeing's my responsibility now. If I let him go out, he gets another knock, the finger's going to be pointed at me".</i></p>
<p>Disadvantages of following the concussion guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players removed from play unnecessarily (false positives) 	<p><i>That if you're concussed that you might actually just be fine straight away and then the coach and all that could be just like, unsure and don't want to put you out there to get hurt even more. And so, you might miss out for the rest of the</i></p>

game even though you're perfectly fine.

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- Difficulty determining the presence/absence of symptoms, particularly in relation to the memory questions and non-specific symptoms
If someone said "What team did you play last week" ... I can't remember who we played last... right now. One thing about all these symptoms though. Throughout a game I reckon I feel half of them... and I wouldn't have been concussed. If you've run flat out for, I don't know, five minutes on the ball and you stop to gather your breath... sometimes I feel like sort of dizzy... sometimes just because I haven't had the oxygen.
 - Player frustration over the time it takes to diagnose and to return to play following a concussion
I can see how people could get frustrated looking at all this return to play kind of stuff. Doing light exercise and all that kind of stuff when all you really want to do is get out there and play.
 - Removal of player's right to decide whether or not they are fit to play
Yeah, well I think when it comes down to it, if you feel like you're up to it, sometimes yeah. You should get the choice.
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- Players changing the way they play to avoid being removed from play

I've seen kids who if they've taken a knock they've come off. They've been told to sit out and they're just...they're frustrated that whole game. They become sort of... they think, "Oh, if I get a knock to the head, I'm not going to be able to play footy. So, I won't sort of put myself in a situation where that could happen".
