



# Concussion Chronicles

Winter 2018



My name is Jamie Huscroft. Like most hockey players, I fell in love with the sport at a young age and continue to get out on the ice as much as time allows. I had the good fortune of playing in the WHL for 4 years and then onto the AHL/NHL for 14 years.

Concussions were not a concern in my early days - if you had one you simply shook it off (if possible) and back on the ice you went. During my pro career I had approximately 13 concussions. These concussions came from sticks, fights, elbows.... and toward the end of my career, a simple body check would put me down.



*This is one of my favorite stories to tell. When I was playing for the Boston Bruins (1994-95 season) I was in a fight and took a punch that knocked me out. When I got up off the ice I immediately grabbed my hockey stick like I was going to start playing again. The linesman grabbed me and said "Husky, drop your stick, buddy" – since I instigated the fight, I got kicked out of the game. I told him I had no clue where I was and to take me to where I needed to be. I went to the locker room where the opposing team's doctor was waiting for me. It didn't take him long to figure out I had a concussion, and he said he would check up on me later. When he came back 15 to 20 minutes later, I asked him who he was and what he was doing in our locker room. This was a bad concussion and put me out for several weeks.*

Over the next 4 to 5 years the concussions became much more frequent. Toward the end of my career I got knocked out 3 times in as many weeks, and at that point I knew something was terribly wrong.

As a player you did not ever want to sit out a game as there was always someone waiting to take your spot. To hide an injury was not uncommon and that's exactly what I did. Coaches, players and even most trainers did not know the consequences of playing with a concussion, so we simply played through it if possible.

After my last concussion (caused by a simple open ice hit), I thought it would get better, but I was greatly mistaken. I went on a downward spiral for the next 5 to 6 months; to the point where I could not be around people (other than my immediate family), and I did not recognize the names of even close friends. Bright lights and loud noise would bring on headaches and fatigue. In the middle of this time period I announced my retirement.

After 6 to 8 months of recovery I started feeling better and went to work for the Sno-King Hockey Association where I am now the Director of Facilities. I still play in charity hockey games and the odd "drop-in" skate but with the understanding that I can't get hit.

In the early years of my playing career we all knew about concussions and that if you had one you could possibly play through it and be just fine. There was no one warning us that if we went back on the ice too soon and got hit again that our careers and futures could be in jeopardy. We have the information in front of us now and no one, of any age, should need to prematurely get back onto the ice until they are back to 100%.

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