**Title of the study**: Exploring Concussion Sustainment, Identification, Management, and Recovery in Canadian Athletes who are Blind or Visually Impaired

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To help you make an informed decision regarding your participation, this letter will explain what the study is about, the possible risks and benefits, and your rights as a research participant. If you do not understand something in the letter, please ask one of the investigators prior to consenting to the study.

**Invitation to participation/What is the study about?**

You are invited to participate in a research study about Canadian athletes who are blind or visually impaired and their concussion experience. This study will explore how athletes who are blind or visually impaired sustain concussions. This study will also explore how concussions are identified and managed in athletes who are blind or visually impaired and what the concussion recovery process looks like for these athletes. This survey was created to improve the knowledge and understanding in how blindness and low vision impacts how someone might get a concussion, how concussions are recognized in individuals with blindness or low vision, how concussions are treated and managed in individuals with blindness or low vision, and how someone with blindness or low vision recovers from their concussion. This study is important because the current concussion management protocols such as the Sport Concussion Awareness Tool (SCAT-5), do not include accommodations for those who are blind or visually impaired. This study will help inform appropriate modifications that should be made to concussion protocols to better accommodate athletes who are blind or visually impaired.

**I. Your responsibilities as a participant**

**What does participation involve?**

Participation in the study will consist of completing one anonymous online survey which should take approximately twenty minutes to complete. This survey will be administered through REDCap and all data will be stored securely on University of Waterloo REDCap database. This is an anonymous survey, which means that the researchers have no way of identifying you or getting in touch with you should you choose to tell us something about yourself or your life experiences. This survey does not require any in-person participation.

**Who may participate in the study?**

In order to participate in the study you must:

* Be at least sixteen years of age
* Have a vision impairment or blindness
* Be an athlete (participating in competitive sport in the provincial, national, or high performance level, or recently retired from sport at this level)
* Have sustained a concussion

**II. Your rights as a participant**

**Is participation in the study voluntary?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to leave the study at any time by not submitting your responses to the survey. You may decline to answer any question(s) you prefer not to answer by leaving the question blank or selecting “prefer not to answer” in the responses.

**How do I withdraw from the study?**

If you wish to withdraw from the study, you can do so by closing the web-browser without submitting your responses to the survey. If you chose to withdraw from the study, please be aware that it is not possible to remove your data from the study that has already been collected because the data is anonymous.

**Will I receive anything for participating in the study?**

You will not receive payment for your participation in the study.

**What are the possible benefits of the study?**

Participation in this study may not provide any personal benefit to you.

The study will benefit the Canadian Sports Programs, community of individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and the academic community in the following ways:

* Development of improved concussion protocols for you and other Canadian athletes. These protocols may lead to a better individual concussion recovery experience for you and other Canadian athletes who are blind or visually impaired.
* Increasing scientific knowledge in the field of concussion and Para sport that will benefit communities of people who are blind or visually impaired in Canada and potentially internationally.

**Receiving study report/findings/publication:** The results of this study may be presented at conferences or published in a scientific journal. The results may also inform the development of new written policies or documents within Canadian Para sport. Participants will remain anonymous in all publications of study results.

**What are the risks associated with the study?**

There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

**Will my identity be known?**

Your participation in this study, and the data collected is anonymous. This means that the data collected will not have any identifiers associated with it and the researchers do not know the identity of those who participated.

**Will my information be kept confidential?**

The information you share in this study will be kept in confidentiality. As a participant in this study, you will be assigned a participant study number. The participant study number is used to protect your identity so that the information you input into the survey can remain anonymous. Your identity will be protected, and no one will know that you are a participant in this study. However, it must also be recognized that when information is transmitted over the internet, privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). In addition, REDCap temporarily collects computer IP address to avoid duplicate responses in the dataset but will not collect information that could identify you personally.

**III. Questions, comments, or concerns**

**Who is sponsoring/funding this study?**

This project has been made possible through safe sport funding provided by the Government of Canada. This is a project of the Canadian Blind Sports Association

**Has the study received ethics clearance?**

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#43096). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

**Who should I contact if I have questions regarding my participation in the study?**

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact Anna Guenther by email at aguenthe@uwaterloo.ca.

You can also contact any member of the research team listed on the first page of the consent form.