

## **Rugby NorCal Concussion Policy**

### **I. Athlete Evaluation and Return to Play**

If an athlete is suspected to have suffered a concussion, s/he will be ineligible to practice or play until the full process below has been completed – this is for the safety and benefit of the athlete and his/her developing brain! During this period, the athlete will appear as “Medically Ineligible” in MatchApt (cannot be placed on a Match Report) and must not be allowed to practice, play in matches, or engage in any other physical activity.

#### **1. At a Match:**

- a. The athletic trainer (ATC) will remove from the match any athlete they suspect may have sustained a concussion and will complete an evaluation
- b. If an athlete is suspected by anyone present (teammate, coach, parent, etc) to have suffered a concussion during a match, they must communicate immediately with the athletic trainer (ATC), who must remove the athlete from the match.
- c. The athletic trainer will give recommendations to parent/guardian (if present) and coach on whether immediate referral to a health care provider or emergency services are necessary and will provide a filled out Physician Concussion Clearance form.
- d. After the match, the ATC will submit an online injury report describing the injury, any actions taken by the ATC, and the ATC's recommendations regarding further assessment or treatment of the injury.
- e. If an ATC is not present, any Coach, ref or team admin who suspects an athlete has sustained a concussion must remove that athlete from participation, refer the athlete for immediate evaluation by a health care provider and immediately contact Rugby NorCal.

#### **2. At a Practice:**

- a. If a suspected concussion occurs at practice when an ATC is not present, the coach must remove the athlete from play immediately, notify the parent/guardian and contact Rugby NorCal to report the suspected concussion.

#### **3. After the Match**

- a. Upon receipt of the electronic injury report, Rugby NorCal will contact the parent/guardian and coach listed in the athlete's MatchApt profile to notify them of the suspected concussion and to communicate next steps.
- b. It is vital that Parent contact information is updated and accurate in the athlete's profile in MatchApt.

#### **4. Physician Evaluation**

- a. The athlete must be evaluated by a physician licensed in the state of California and working within their scope of practice (MD or DO) to officially diagnose a concussion or to be cleared as to not having sustained a concussion.

i. It is recommended that the athlete be evaluated within 48 - 72 hours of the initial injury.

ii. It is required that the athlete have been evaluated by the physician at least 2 days prior to beginning the GRTP protocol (see below).

b. If the initial physicians visit results in a diagnosis of no concussion, the written diagnosis must be submitted to RNC using the Physician Concussion Clearance Form & the athlete will be cleared.

## **5. Required Rest Period**

a. Following a concussion diagnosis, the athlete must complete a full 2 weeks (14 day) rest and recovery period followed by a 7 day GRTP protocol before the athlete will be cleared to play - this is absolutely critical to the athlete's health and safety!

b. World Rugby and USA Rugby require that children ages 18 and under must have complete physical rest for a minimum of two weeks following a concussion or suspected concussion.

c. During this period the athlete cannot partake in any rugby or other physical activity other than rehab prescribed by a physician, physical therapist or athletic trainer.

## **6. Graduated Return to Play (GRTP)**

a. If the athlete has been symptom-free for two full days at the end of the two weeks rest period, they may begin the Graduated Return To Play (GRTP) protocol.

b. The athlete must also have been evaluated by a physician at least two days prior to beginning the GRTP protocol and have their approval to begin the GRTP.

c. The GRTP incorporates a progressive exercise program to re-introduce athletes to sport following concussion. 24 hours is required between each step and the athlete must remain symptom free in order to progress to the next level of activity.

## **7. Physician's Clearance**

a. Once the GRTP is completed, the athlete must return to the doctor to obtain a signed Physician Concussion Clearance Form clearing him/her to return to playing rugby.

b. The parent/guardian must submit this physician's clearance letter along with the completed GRTP sheet to Rugby NorCal.

c. Once all documentation is submitted and verified, the athlete will be cleared to play in RNC MatchApt system and on all match reports.

- d. Athletes are not permitted to compete until Rugby NorCal has removed "Medical Ineligible" from their MatchApt profile

## II. Concussion Training Requirements

The State of California passed new legislation (AB2007) in late September 2016 requiring all youth sports organizations to annually provide & document concussion education for athletes, parents, coaches and administrators. RNC has adopted the following requirements to ensure compliance and the greatest possible level of concussion awareness and responsible action by everyone involved in youth rugby in Northern California. Completion & compliance will be tracked and reported.

1. During the RNC registration process, **ALL Parents and Athletes** must annually read, sign and submit a concussion education document prior to athlete participation. Athletes must report symptoms of concussion.
  - a. The document can be signed electronically within the athlete's profile in MatchApt or can be downloaded from the website.
2. **ALL Coaches** must annually complete an online concussion training module prior to coaching and complete a concussion education document.
  - a. The document can be downloaded from the website, signed electronically and uploaded to their profile in MatchApt or InjureFree.
3. **ALL Administrators and Referees** must annually read, sign and submit a concussion education document prior to participation.
  - a. The document can be downloaded from the website, signed electronically and uploaded to their profile in MatchApt or InjureFree.

## III. Additional Items

1. Non-rugby concussion – what to do? Non-rugby concussions suffered either prior to or during the rugby season must be reported to Rugby NorCal. Additional impacts can be extremely dangerous for athletes and particularly for children. RNC athletes who have suffered a non-rugby concussion during the rugby season must still enter the RNC concussion protocol for their continued safety.
2. Obligation to report concussion symptoms Everyone involved with youth rugby – athletes, parents, coaches, administrators, etc. - has an obligation to be aware of the symptoms of concussion (through their required form of annual training, see Section II) and to report any suspected concussion symptoms. Symptoms should be reported to an athletic trainer (ATC) if present or to Rugby NorCal if an ATC is not present.