



Rugby Canada's PlaySmart – Putting Players First. playsmart.rugbycanada.ca

In 2016 Rugby Canada launched Rugby Canada PlaySmart which is a Player Welfare initiative that provides resources for coaches, players, parents, teachers, match officials and administrators of rugby.

The Rugby Canada Return to Play guidelines are developed by World Rugby. The return to play guidelines have been shared with Parachute Canada as part of the National Harmonization Program for sports across Canada, to ensure our content is aligned with International Standards of Concussion Management. International standards were updated in 2016 at the 5th international conference on concussion in sport in Berlin. World Rugby is one of 5 organising partners of this international event.

Rugby Canada and its 10 Provincial Unions require that all club coaches must complete Rugby Ready online module annually. Rugby Ready is an online module that focuses on player welfare, and specifically the 5 areas of contact in rugby (tackle ruck, maul, scrum and jumping in the line-out)

Rugby Canada and its 10 Provincial Unions require that all club coaches must complete Concussion Management for the general public online module annually. Concussion Management for the general public educates coaches on the signs and symptoms of concussion, how to recognize and remove, and if in doubt sit the player out.

Rugby Canada created and developed 'Tackle Technique and Tracking' National Key Theme. Provincial Unions are able to offer to this 2-hour professional development workshops.

Rugby Canada in partnership with Rugby Ontario is piloting an introduction to tackle technique resource. This resource is aimed at coaches that are introducing the tackle technique and provides how to create a safe environment and practical examples of how to gradually introduce tackling safely into the game.

World Rugby and Rugby Canada along with the 10 provincial Unions adopt a zero-tolerance approach to head contact. There are sanctions for making contact to the head in a rugby game. Players are penalized for accidental contact to the head, for more serious incidents of head contact players are removed with either a yellow or red card, with further disciplinary sanctions to follow. Such as being banned from games.

Rugby Canada runs online webinars that coaches, players, match officials, parents and administrators are invited to, these webinars were on how to manage head contact as a referee. What a referee should do, what the expectations are of players making a tackle and how to apply a zero-

RUGBY CANADA

Toronto Office / Bureau de Toronto
30 Rue East Beaver Creek Road, Suite 110
Richmond Hill, ON CANADA L4B 1J2
Tel / Tél: 905 707 8998
Fax / Téléc: 905 707 9707

Victoria Office / Bureau de Victoria
3024 Rue Glen Lake Road
Langford, BC CANADA V9B 4B4
Tel / Tél: 250 418 8998
Fax / Téléc: 250 386 3810

rugby.ca
info@rugby.ca





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tolerance approach to head contact in the game at all levels. These webinars are recorded and made available to the rugby community.

All coach education, Community Initiation and Competition Introduction coaching courses, cover the 5 areas of contact in a game, which are tackle, ruck, maul, scrum and line-out, coaches have the opportunity to observe these areas being coached safely as well as an opportunity to coach these 5 areas.

World Rugby has developed a free Concussion Management App available for players, parents, coaches, administrators free. The app has information about concussion, recognizing concussion, concussion management, how the referee will manage concussion and the graduated return to play policy.

The Rugby Canada PlaySmart Website includes Regional health line numbers, so that parents or players have a contact to reach out to should they have any questions or concerns about a potential concussion. These health lines are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week all year round bilingually.

Since 2015 Rugby Canada has prioritized that a position be made available at the AGM and mid-term AGM to update administrators and provincial unions on players welfare and concussion management. The most recent AGM had Gord Stringer (Father of Rowan Stringer) and Steph Cowle (Parachute Canada) speak on a panel about concussion management to our provincial unions.

Rugby Canada had a staff member on the Rowans Law Advisory Committee. Rugby Canada has used the recommendations to guide nationally how concussion management is managed.

Rugby Canada recently spoke at the recent ICS Niagara (Annual Concussion Summit) to share with over 400 healthcare practitioners, school board members and sport administrators the work being done around concussion management in rugby (this is one of many events RC has spoken at, which also include but not limited to Ontario Sports Symposium, World Rugby Training and Education Conference, Coaching Association Partner Congress)

Rugby Canada and the 10 Provincial Unions adopt a recognize and remove approach, this means that if any player is suspected of concussion they are immediately removed from the game or training and seek further medical support. A player suspected of concussion cannot be removed with signs and symptoms of concussion, and an assessment been done at the game or training. There is no Head Injury Assessment in amateur rugby.

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