

Rowan's Law: Removal-From-Sport & Return-To-Sport Protocols for Sport Organizations

Everyone involved in sports, including athletes, parents or guardians, coaches, team trainers, officials, teachers and licensed health-care professionals, can play a role in helping to prevent, identify and manage concussions. For more information on concussions and concussions in sport, please visit <https://www.world.rugby/the-game/player-welfare/medical/concussion/concussion-guidelines>.

Designated Person(s)

In accordance with the requirements set out in *Rowan's Law* and its associated regulation, every sport organization is required to identify a designated person(s) as having specific responsibilities under the removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols. The responsibilities for the designated person(s) may be shared between one or more individuals. If your sport organization has more than one designated person(s), please ensure that each designate is clear about who has what responsibility under the Removal-from-Sport protocol and the Return-to-Sport protocol.

Under the Removal-from-Sport protocol (Please refer to Rugby Alberta's Blue Card Protocol), the designated person(s) is/are responsible for ensuring that:

- An athlete is immediately removed from further training, practice or competition if the athlete has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion, regardless of whether or not the concussion was sustained from a sport activity associated with Rugby Alberta.
- If in the opinion of the designated person(s), there is an emergency and/or any red flag signs and/or symptoms appear – including those resulting from a suspected concussion, call 911;
- Removal of the athlete from further training, practice or competition; and if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the parent or guardian is informed of the removal;
- The athlete, or the parent or guardian if the athlete is under 18 years of age, is advised that the athlete is required to undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner before the athlete will be permitted to return to training, practice or competition according to the Return-to-Sport protocol (please refer to Rugby Alberta's Blue Card Protocol) for Rugby Alberta.

- An athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian receives the Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport protocols for Rugby Alberta as soon as possible after the athlete's removal;
- Once removed, the athlete is not permitted to return to training, practice or competition, except in accordance with Rugby Alberta Return-to-Sport protocol;

Under the Return-to-Sport protocol for Rugby Alberta (please refer to Rugby Alberta Blue Card Protocol), the designated person(s) is/are responsible for ensuring that:

- An athlete who has sustained a concussion or is suspected of having sustained a concussion does not return to training, practice or competition until permitted to do so in accordance with the Rugby Alberta Return-to-Sport protocol;
- When an athlete has **not** been diagnosed with a concussion, the athlete is only permitted to return to training, practice or competition if the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian provides confirmation to the designated person(s) about the outcome of the athlete's medical assessment, specifically that the athlete:
 - has undergone a medical assessment by the physician or nurse practitioner and has **not** been diagnosed as having a concussion, and
 - has been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition by a physician or nurse practitioner;
- When an athlete **is** diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner as having a concussion, the athlete is not permitted to move on to unrestricted training, practice or competition unless the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian provides a confirmation of medical clearance by the physician or nurse practitioner to the designated person(s);
- An athlete is not permitted to return to training, practice or competition through the Rugby Alberta graduated Return-to-Sport steps unless the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent or guardian has shared the medical advice or recommendations they received, if any, with the designated person(s);
- When an athlete is diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner as having a concussion, the athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, the athlete's parent/guardian has been informed of the importance of disclosing the diagnosis to

any other sport organization with which the athlete is registered or school that the athlete attends.

The regulation states that a designated person(s) may rely on the information received from an athlete or, if the athlete is under 18 years of age, from the athlete's parent or guardian in carrying out their responsibilities under Rugby Alberta Return-to-Sport protocol.

The following individual(s) is/are recognized by Rugby Alberta
_____ as the "designated person(s)" with respect to
Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport protocols for Rugby Alberta:

Name of Designated person(s):

Date: _____

Term of designation: _____

Removal-from-Sport Protocol

BLUE CARD PROCESS

When a player is removed from the field of play for a suspected concussion, the match official or designated individual will issue that player with a “Blue Card”, in a similar manner to which a red or yellow card is issued. For rugby activities without a Match Official, coaches or administrators will notify Rugby Alberta via issuing a Blue Card via SportLomo Team Sheets, or if not available, contacting Rugby Alberta at memberservice@rugbyalberta.com. All member clubs will designate a Blue Card Officer(s) to ensure that the process is followed for all rugby activities within their club.

- 1) That player is required to leave the field of play immediately and cannot return and play in that match. Please note in accordance with World Rugby and Rugby Canada direction, there is **no sideline Head Injury Assessment (HIA) process at any level of Club rugby.**
- 2) The match official includes the issuing of the Blue Card in their match report.
- 3) The player and their club receive an email notification from Rugby Alberta of the issuing of the Blue Card and the required process to be followed (Appendix C).
- 4) The player issued with the Blue Card cannot return to play in any future match without receiving a written medical clearance, meeting the requirements of the World Rugby Return to Play Protocols and receiving a written clearance from Rugby Alberta to return to play.
- 5) For rugby activities without a Match Official, coaches or administrators will notify Rugby Alberta via issuing a Blue Card via SportLomo Team Sheets, or if not available, contacting Rugby Alberta at memberservice@rugbyalberta.com

Return-to-Sport Protocol

BLUE CARD OFF-FIELD PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

The issuing of a Blue Card by a match official initiates the Rugby Alberta Blue Card off-field processes and procedures:

- 1) The match official includes in their match report to Rugby Alberta the name, club and circumstances surrounding the issuing of the Blue Card.
- 2) For rugby activities without a Match Official, coaches or administrators will notify Rugby Alberta via issuing a Blue Card via SportLomo Team Sheets, or if not available, contacting Rugby Alberta at memberservice@rugbyalberta.com
- 3) Rugby Alberta notifies the player and their Club President & Secretary in via email (see Appendix C) indicating that the player has been stood down from rugby activity because of a suspected concussion. The notification will outline the procedure to facilitate the player's return to training and playing.
- 4) Rugby Alberta enters the player and incident details into the Rugby Alberta Blue Card register.
- 5) Rugby Alberta changes the status of the player in the Rugby Canada Registration system from active to inactive/blue carded. The player cannot be included on a team sheet or participate in any match until the player's status is returned to active.
- 6) The player seeks a medical assessment from a qualified medical doctor or nurse practitioner, ideally within 24 to 48 hours. The doctor completes and signs the Rugby Alberta Medical Assessment Letter (See Appendix A). The player provides a copy of this letter to Rugby Alberta, their team coach and Club President and Secretary.
- 7) If the medical doctor/nurse practitioner indicates through signing the Rugby Alberta Medical Assessment Letter that the player has not been diagnosed with a concussion, they can resume full participation in rugby related activities and will be returned to "active" status in the Rugby Canada Registration system.
- 8) If the medical doctor indicates through signing the Rugby Alberta Medical Assessment Letter that the player has been diagnosed with a concussion, the player must undertake the World Rugby Graduated Return to Play (GRTP) Program.

WORLD RUGBY GRADUATED RETURN TO PLAY (GRTP) PROGRAM TABLE

From World Rugby - Concussion Guidance
<https://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/concussion>

REHABILITATION STAGE	EXERCISE ALLOWED	OBJECTIVE
1. Minimum Rest Period *	Complete body and brain rest without symptoms	Recovery
2. Light Aerobic Exercise	Light jogging for 10-15 minutes, swimming or cycling at low to moderate intensity. No resistance training. Symptom free during full 24 hour period.	Increased heart rate
3. Sport Specific Exercise	Running drills. No head impact activities.	Add movement
4. Non-Contact training drills	Progression to more complex drills (e.g. passing drills). May start progressive resistance training.	Exercise, coordination and cognitive load
5. Full contact practice	Normal training activities	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff
6. Return to Play	Player rehabilitated	Recover

- 1) Prior to entering stage 5 of the GRTP (i.e. the stage at which the player resumes full contact practice), the player must obtain a signed copy of the Rugby Alberta Medical Clearance Letter (see Appendix B) from a medical doctor clearing them of any concussion symptoms. The player must provide a copy of this medical clearance letter to Rugby Alberta as well as their team coach and Club President and Secretary no later than 9am on the business day prior to a scheduled match in which a return to play is planned.
- 2) Upon receipt of this medical clearance, Rugby Alberta will amend the status of the player in the Rugby Canada Registration System from “inactive” to “active”. The player and their Club President and Secretary will be notified accordingly. Once this notification is issued, the player is eligible to commence playing again.
- 3) If a player participates in a match prior to clearance for return to play being issued by Rugby Alberta (i.e. whilst the player’s status is inactive), both the player and their Club may be sanctioned in accordance with the Rugby Alberta Schedule of Sanctions.