

12. MEDICAL AND SAFETY DIRECTIVES



australian
RUGBY

**Coaching Course
Record Book**

3.1 ARU Medical and Safety Recommendations

The Australian Rugby Union (ARU) and the International Rugby Board (IRB) encourages Clubs and Schools to take recommended measures to ensure that the game is both safe and enjoyable to play. The following recommendations are in the interest of player safety.

INJURY MANAGEMENT

Medical Requirements For Player Care

The following are the recommended medical requirements for Unions, Clubs and Schools.

SMART RUGBY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Smart Rugby qualified coaches and referees – Mandatory qualification which provides best practice principles for all the contact elements of the game.
FIRST AID PERSONNEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Basic First Aid certification or higher qualification – including knowledge of first aid skills and procedures.
FIRST AID REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● First Aid Kit● Ice● Stretcher (preferable scoop stretcher) for use by trained personnel● Emergency contacts for nearest hospital, doctor, dentist, etc● Telephone (for use in emergency)● Emergency vehicle access for Ambulance providing clear entry● Medical & Safety Recommendations in a suitable location visible to rugby stakeholders

MANAGEMENT OF SERIOUS INJURY

Suspected Spinal Injury

In the event of a suspected spinal or other potentially serious injury:

1. GET HELP FAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● CALL '000' FOR AN AMBULANCE
2. DO NOT MOVE THE PLAYER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● DO NOT MOVE THE PLAYER unless directed by qualified medical personnel.● A player suffering from a severe neck injury may still be able to move all limbs. Moving such a player before stabilizing the neck may increase the chance of permanent paralysis.
3. DO NOT APPLY CERVICAL COLLAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● DO NOT APPLY CERVICAL COLLAR unless specifically trained to do so.● Non-medically qualified first aiders, referees and coaches should err on the side of caution and seek assistance of qualified medical personnel in the event of any suspected spinal or potentially serious injury.
4. FOLLOW SERIOUS INJURY PROTOCOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● FOLLOW SERIOUS INJURY PROTOCOL in the event of a serious injury to a player's head or neck (ie suspected spinal injury) or fatality, including notifying Serious Injury Hotline and completing Serious Injury Report.
SERIOUS INJURY HOTLINE 1800 036 156	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● For a complete copy of the Serious Injury Protocol & Report, contact your State/Territory Union or visit www.rugby.com.au/seriousinjury

MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION

The ARU Concussion Guidelines are outlined in section 3.2 of this resource.

If The Player Is Unconscious

Always suspect an associated neck injury. If respiratory arrest occurs, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) should be commenced. CALL '000' FOR AN AMBULANCE.

Once conscious, determine the manner in which it happened and if there is tingling in upper or lower limbs and if any power loss is present. If there is no one experienced in the management of this problem the PLAYER SHOULD NOT BE MOVED but given emotional support while awaiting the ambulance. Ensure the player is sufficiently warm.

IF A FRACTURE OR DISLOCATION OF A LIMB IS SUSPECTED

The injured limb should be supported, ideally with a splint, while the player is lifted onto a stretcher or helped from the field. X-rays to confirm the diagnosis (or exclude injury) are essential and should be performed as soon as possible.

If the fracture is found to be compound (bony fragments protruding through the skin) the area should be covered with a clean towel while waiting for the ambulance. In this situation, the player should not consume food or drink until cleared by a doctor (in case a general anaesthetic is required).

TREATMENT OF INJURED PLAYERS WHO ARE BLEEDING

A player who has an open or bleeding wound must leave the playing area until such time as the bleeding is controlled and the wound is covered or dressed. On returning to play all bloodied clothing must be replaced. Such a player may be replaced on a temporary basis but if unable to resume playing within 15 minutes the replacement becomes permanent.

IF A TOOTH IS KNOCKED OUT

It should be replaced immediately in its socket (if dirty, wash it first with milk if available) and mould aluminum foil over the replaced tooth and its adjacent teeth. The player should then seek immediate dental advice.

SEEK PROMPT MEDICAL ADVICE

Prompt medical advice (usually at an emergency department, hospital or after-hours medical centre) should be obtained if:

- › Unconsciousness, persistent headache, vomiting or nausea occurs after a blow to the head, or a concussion injury.
- › Breathing difficulties occur after an injury to the head, neck or chest.
- › Severe pains in the neck occur.
- › Abdominal pains occur, particularly if associated with shoulder tip pain.
- › Blood is present in the urine.
- › An eye injury occurs.
- › If a player collapses separate to any trauma.
- › There is any concern over a player's injury or health following training or a match.

SOFT TISSUE INJURIES

The RICER injury management approach is the best treatment for a soft tissue injury, and should be initiated immediately after injury for 48-72 hours. Applying RICER will assist in reducing bleeding and swelling and provide support for the injured area.

REST	Avoid stressing the injured area for at least 48-72 hours.
ICE	Apply ice to the injured area for 20 minutes, every 2 hours for the first 48-72 hours after injury.
COMPRESSION	Firmly apply wide compression bandage over the injured area, above and below the injury site.
ELEVATION	Raise the injured area above the level of the heart at all times.
REFERRAL	Refer to a qualified health professional (e.g. Doctor, Physiotherapist, etc).

Avoid the HARM-ful factors for 72 hours after the injury.

HEAT	Heat increases the bleeding at the injured site. Avoid hot baths and showers, saunas, hot water bottles, heat packs and liniments.
ALCOHOL	Alcohol increases bleeding and swelling at the injury site, and delays healing.
RUNNING	Running or any form of exercise may cause further damage. A player should not resume exercise within 72 hours of an injury unless approved by medical professional.
MASSAGE	Massage causes an increase in bleeding and swelling, and should be avoided within 72 hours of the injury. If the injury is massaged within the first 72 hours, it may take longer to heal.

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

SMART RUGBY

SmartRugby is designed to inform coaches and match officials of best practice techniques, to minimise the risk of injury to players, and increase the level of confidence that participants and families can gain from their association with the game.

All players are to be in-serviced in the SmartRugby Program by their team coach.

MAYDAY CALL

The “MAYDAY” call is a safety technique put into operation when a player believes that he/she is in a potentially dangerous position in a scrum. The process to be followed by players and referees when the “MAYDAY” call is heard is tabled in section 2.6 of this resource.

POSITION SELECTION

Players should be selected for positions appropriate to their physical build and stature. Players should be physically fit to play Rugby when selected and those unfit should not be selected.

Players should not be selected to play in the front row unless they have recent experience or have been coached in specialist front row play.

All players should be encouraged to regularly carry out special exercises that strengthen their neck, limbs and body. This is especially applicable to those in the scrum who should build up their neck and back muscles as well as upper body strength.

SCRUM ENGAGEMENT SEQUENCE (For Games At All Levels)

The scrum engagement is managed in sequence by the referee to ensure that it occurs safely, squarely and in synchronisation. It is to be strictly observed and the Law requires that referees will call the scrum engagement in the sequence as outlined in section 2.6 of this resource.

TACKLING

Statistics indicate that the majority of serious injuries are now occurring during or consequent to the tackle. The risk of injury can be reduced by teaching correct head positioning as an essential component of a safe tackle, as outlined in section 2.2 of this resource.

ELIMINATION OF ILLEGAL AND FOUL PLAY

Head and Shoulders Above Hips

Correct body position in Scrum, Ruck and Maul is critical. Players should join in a safe manner, ensuring that their head and shoulders are above the hips at all times. The IRB has reiterated its position that the game can only be played by players who are on their feet.

Punch or Stomp Send Offs

For all competitions U19 and downwards it is mandatory for referees to send off players who punch or stomp opponents. The ARU believes this is an appropriate measure to assist in the elimination / reduction of foul play and to send a clear message to the community that Rugby is serious about countering this sort of behaviour.

Referees are reminded to be particularly harsh when dealing with players who engage in Illegal and/or Foul Play or engage in any form of retaliation. Judicial Committees should take stern action with players found guilty of Illegal and/or Foul Play.

PREVENTING INJURY

Mouth Guard

It is recommended that players wear a specially made and fitted mouth guard during both matches and training sessions.

Hydration

Coaches should ensure that an adequate supply of fluid, preferably water, is consumed by players before, during and after training sessions and the match, so that appropriate levels of hydration are maintained.

MORE INFORMATION

Further details on Medical Requirements for Player Care and Safety Recommendations can be found at the Australian Rugby Union website www.rugby.com.au/safety.