



CONCUSSION POLICY OF ALBUQUERQUE YOUTH RUGBY UNITED

Dear Parents,

While statistically rugby has a lower incidence of concussion than football, cheerleading, basketball, lacrosse and other popular youth sports, the chance of concussion or brain injury is always possible in a fast moving game involving contact. The AYRU takes the issue of player safety, health and specifically concussions and brain injury very seriously, and together with USA Rugby has enacted the following concussion guidelines and policy in accordance with the law of New Mexico.

CONCUSSION GUIDELINES – KNOW THE “5 R’s”

The AYRU and USA Rugby require that ALL rugby players, coaches, staff, parents, referees, volunteers, and even fans follow these five basic steps when dealing with suspected concussions:

- **RECOGNIZE** – Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion so you understand when an athlete might have a suspected concussion or brain injury.
- **REMOVE** – If an athlete has a concussion or brain injury, or even a suspected concussion, he or she must be removed from play immediately.
- **REFER** – Once removed from play, the player must be referred immediately to a qualified healthcare professional who is trained in evaluating and treating concussions.
- **RECOVER** – Full recovery from the concussion is required before return to play is authorized. This includes being *symptom-free*. Rest and some specific treatment options are critical for the health of the injured participant.
- **RETURN** – In order for safe return to play in rugby, the athlete must be symptom-free and cleared in writing by a qualified healthcare professional who is trained in evaluating and treating concussions. The athlete will then complete the **GRTP (Graduated Return to Play)** protocol.

THE AYRU’s POLICY

The AYRU's Concussion Policy follows the guidelines of "Know The 5 R's" and is in accordance with the law of the State of New Mexico:

1. A coach, referee, player and/or parent will remove the player from play (match or practice) immediately if a concussion or brain injury is suspected.
2. A player cannot return to play under any circumstances once they have been removed due to a suspected concussion or brain injury.
3. A parent or player guardian cannot override the decision of a referee and/or coach to remove a player from play due to a suspected concussion or brain injury.
4. After a suspected concussion or brain injury the following steps are required: (1) Rest and minimal activity for at least 24-hours, AND, (2) Player must visit a medical professional to assess the injury
5. If the medical professional determines that a concussion or brain injury has occurred the player will refrain from any play at all for 2-weeks with no exception. After 2-weeks the player will need to have a medical professional observe that the player is symptom free, and then clear the player in writing to begin the GRTP process.
6. If the medical professional determines that a concussion or brain injury has NOT occurred, the medical professional must clear the player in writing to begin the GRTP process.
7. THUS, whether a concussion or brain injury has been diagnosed or not by a medical professional, the AYRU will always follow the GRTP process to return any player back to play if that player has been removed from play due to a suspected concussion or brain injury.
8. ADDITIONALLY, the AYRU cannot accept any player back to activity without a clearance in

writing from a medical professional that states the player is symptom free after being removed from play due to a suspected concussive or brain injury event whether or not an actual concussion or brain injury has actually occurred.

GRADUATED RETURN TO PLAY (GRTP)

Following a concussion or suspected concussion the management of the GRTP protocol will be undertaken with the full cooperation of the player in order to return the player to play. The GRTP starts once the medical professional has cleared the player in writing as having not had a concussion and being symptom free, or if after a concussion was diagnosed by the medical professional the player has rested for the mandatory 14 days and then been cleared in writing by the medical professional as being symptom free.

The GRTP requires five steps for the graduated return to play, where at each step the player is determined to still be symptom free. The GRTP steps are:

1. Light aerobic exercise during a 48-hour period, then
2. Sport specific exercise (like passing the ball, but not contact) during a 48-hour period, then
3. Non-contact training drills during a 48-hour period, then
4. Full contact practice for a 48-hour period, then
5. Return to match play (total rest and GRTP for a diagnosed concussion is 23-days).

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact your coach. More details on the GRTP process as dictated by USA Rugby and the International Rugby Board can be found at the link below:

http://www.irbplayerwelfare.com/pdfs/IRB_Concussion_Guidelines_EN

(signed by parent)

(signed by player)

(printed name)

(printed name)