



The Allegheny Rugby Union

Established 1975

Concussion Policy

Preamble: Contact sports, such as rugby football, have the potential to result in injury to participants. Typically, these injuries are obvious and readily diagnosable and result in a player's inability to continue participating. Concussion, however, is extremely dangerous, difficult to diagnose and may be relatively symptom free. To protect the safety of its members the ARU is adopting the following concussion policy.

- ❖ Players suspected of suffering a concussion are required to seek medical advice and, if cleared, may resume play. Proof of clearance is required. Symptoms of concussion are described below.
- ❖ Referees, whose primary responsibility is the protection of the players on the field, are empowered to remove a player from the match if concussion is suspected.
- ❖ Diagnosis of concussion is difficult even for trained professionals. Referees will be expected to use their best judgment based on the symptoms outlined below to determine whether they suspect a concussion has occurred. Referees will not be held responsible for correctly diagnosing a concussion during the course of a rugby event. If a referee suspects that a player has suffered a concussion they do have a responsibility and the authority to remove the player from the field of play.
- ❖ A player who has suffered a suspected concussion may not participate in a rugby match or in a rugby practice for a period of three weeks from the date of the injury unless cleared to do so by a doctor. A player may be required to produce proof of medical clearance.
- ❖ After this three week period the player may only resume participation when they are symptom free and have received medical clearance from a medical professional. Coaches (where applicable) should review the medical clearance before permitting the player to take part in practice or play.
- ❖ USA Rugby, and by extension, the ARU, requires that participants carry medical insurance that will cover costs up to at least \$100,000.
- ❖ Concussions are to be reported to the Union as soon as is practical. Concussions can be reported to any current Union officer.
- ❖ ***It is the responsibility of each individual player to protect his or her own safety. The ARU has defined the policy and is not responsible for a player's actions after suffering a suspected concussion. The player is responsible for seeking medical advice and for complying with both the ARU's concussion policy and the direction of the medical professional.***

The Allegheny Rugby Union also urges you to keep the following in mind:

- ❖ Correct/safe tackling techniques should be practiced at all times.
- ❖ Scrumcaps are NOT designed to reduce the likelihood of concussion. Rugby headgear is merely designed to prevent abrasions.
- ❖ Wearing a *custom-made* mouth guard may reduce the risk of concussion.

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<p align="center">CONCUSSION SIGNS (immediately after the injury)</p>	<p align="center">CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS (post match)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vacant stare • Slow responses (e.g. slow to answer questions or follow instructions) • Slurred or incoherent speech • Forgets events prior to impact • Forgets events after impact • Unable to focus attention (e.g. easily distracted) • Disorientated (e.g. walking in wrong direction, unaware of time, date, place) • Uncoordinated (e.g. stumbling, unable to walk in a straight line) • Emotionally confused (e.g. aggressive, appearing distraught, crying for no apparent reason) • Dazed or stunned <p><i>If player reports any of these symptoms, they should not return to play, and they should immediately see a medical professional.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of nausea (sickness) • Double vision or fuzzy vision • Ringing in the ears • Any period of loss of consciousness • Headache • Pupils appear different in size • Sensitivity to light or noise • Feeling sluggish, groggy or dizzy • Concentration or memory problems <p><i>If player reports any of these symptoms, they should immediately see a medical professional.</i></p>