

RUGBY INJURIES

Play smart
play safe!



As many as 1 in 4 rugby players will be injured during the season.

On average each player performs 20-40 tackles per match.

Almost 25% of neck injuries occur when there is a mismatch in experience between the two opposing front rows.

Pre-season balance & stability training programs have been shown to reduce rugby injuries by up to 75%.

Facts on Rugby Injuries

Rugby is a fast-moving and high intensity team sport. Although historically dominated by males, the sport is gaining popularity among female athletes, particularly at high school and collegiate levels.

How many rugby players are there?

- An estimated 104,000 Canadians aged 15 and over play rugby.

How often do injuries occur?

- Despite the aggressive nature of the game and lack of protective equipment, injury rates in rugby are reported to be lower than American football, and similar to soccer.
- Approximately 80% of injuries are experienced by males aged 15-19 years and over.

When do injuries occur?

- More injuries occur during matches with over 70% of injuries in the 2nd half of a match.
- Tackling or being tackled is the phase of play associated with approximately half of all rugby related injuries.
- The tackle is also responsible for the highest percentage of neck injuries.

Who gets injured?

- Hookers and flankers sustain the most injuries of rugby player positions.
- Forwards are more frequently injured than backs because of their greater involvement in physical collisions and tackles.
- In the backline, wings, fullbacks and centres are at the highest risk of injury.
- The locks are at greatest risk of facial cuts and cauliflower ear because of exposure to the scrum.
- Players in rucks and mauls commonly suffer injuries to fingers and thumbs as well as abrasions and lacerations from cleats.

What kinds of injuries occur?

- Sprained ankles are the most common injury in Rugby representing almost 1 in 7 injuries.
- Studies have found between 5-25% of rugby injuries are head injuries, including concussion.
- Over 40% of injuries are muscular strain/contusion, 30% are sprains, followed by fractures, lacerations, and over-use injuries.



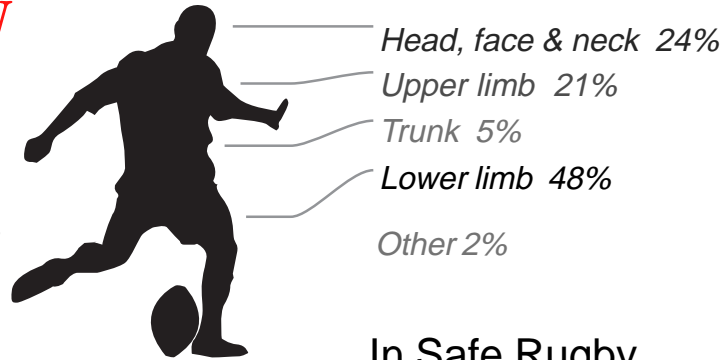
SAFE RISKS

 PRACTICES

SAFETY & PREVENTION

Data was provided by The Canadian Hospital Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRRP), 2001, BC Children's Hospital Emergency Department

Percent of Injuries by location on the body



Preparation is important

- More injuries occur at the beginning of a season, suggesting that pre-season conditioning could reduce injuries.
- Pre-season conditioning programs should include strength, flexibility and endurance training; progressing gradually in intensity and duration.
- Being regularly active outside of rugby (cross-training) also has a protective effect against injury.
- Performance enhancing drugs should **never** be used as they greatly increase the risk of death and disease.

Rugby equipment and environment

- All player equipment *must* be properly fitted, maintained and the safest possible.
- All playing fields *must* be well maintained and clear of debris and spectators.
- All players should wear mouthguards during both practice and games to prevent mouth/face injuries and reduce concussion and neck injury.*
- Headgear should also be worn to prevent lacerations and abrasions. Headgear *will not* reduce the likelihood of concussion.



In Safe Rugby...

- Safer practices=Less Injuries
- Only more experienced players should play the front row positions that require significant practice to master the skills of scrummaging and tackling.
- Continued education keeps Rugby leaders informed of new injury prevention information.

Certified coaches can teach attacking and defensive techniques that may reduce injuries.

Certified referees can take an active role to prevent other situations that may result in injury.

- It is mandatory that all teams have access to facilities (scrum machines) to practice safe scrummaging.

* Supported by systematic review of sports injury prevention strategies (BCIRPU, CHEO, 2000)

Must-See Rugby Websites:

www.rugbycanada.ca
All you need to know about rugby risk and safety management.

www.bcrugby.com
Find "Staying Healthy & Playing Safely" information.

www.irb.org
The International Rugby Board is the world-governing and law-making body for the game of rugby.

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The British Columbia Injury Research and Prevention Unit (BCIRPU) is committed to meeting the challenge of making BC a safe place to live and work by coordinating efforts that will prevent or reduce injuries, their consequences, and costs.

B.C. Injury Research
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