

RFU Regulation 9 – Player Safety

General

- **9.1** Rugby is a physical contact sport. Like all sports, injuries may occur as a result of isolated incidents or through the continuous playing of the Game over an extended period of time. Safety is of paramount importance and it is therefore essential for those involved in the Game to consider their own safety and the safety of others at all times. They should familiarise themselves with any specific responsibilities that may be applicable to them, as set out in various documents issued by the RFU and/or World Rugby from time to time.
- **9.2** All those involved in the Game should consider their own fitness before participating in any rugby activity. The parents and guardians of players under the age of 18 should consider the fitness of those for whom they have responsibility. In particular, it is recommended to seek medical advice after injury and before recommencing any rugby activity.
- **9.3** All clubs and those involved in arranging any rugby activity:
 - **a.** must complete an annual risk assessment and ensure there is an appropriate level of immediate care and/or first aid cover, and equipment provided for that rugby activity as determined by such risk assessment. The annual first aid risk assessments should be completed between 1 July and 30 September in every Season. Clubs and those involved in arranging any rugby activity shall provide a copy of any risk assessment to the RFU immediately upon request;
 - **b.** must have access to a telephone to ensure that the emergency services can be contacted immediately when needed and ensure there is clear vehicular access for an ambulance or other emergency vehicle;
 - **c.** in respect of contact rugby activity, must comply with the RugbySafe First Aid and Immediate Care Provision Standards as follows unless Regulation 9.3(d) or 9.3(e) apply:
 - **d.** Clubs and those involved in arranging any rugby activity must provide a level of immediate care and/or first aid cover that reflects a recent risk assessment carried out for that club or event. This may be greater than or less the RugbySafe First Aid/Immediate Care Provision Standards but must consider whether these standards are applicable and can only deviate from them if the risk assessment gives good reason to do so; and
 - **e.** In the event that the level of immediate care and/or first aid cover expected to be available is temporarily unavailable, clubs and those

involved in arranging any rugby activity must assess the risk and may only undertake that activity if they are satisfied that the level of immediate care and/or first aid cover is appropriate for the rugby activity undertaken on that temporary basis.

Head Injuries and Concussion

- **9.4** Any individual who exhibits any of the signs or symptoms of concussion should be immediately and permanently removed safely from the field of play and should not return to play that day. It is recommended that they are assessed by an appropriate onsite Healthcare Professional or by accessing the NHS by calling 111 within 24 hours of the injury. If there are concerns about other significant injury or the presence of “red flags” then the player should receive urgent medical assessment onsite or in a hospital Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department using ambulance transfer by calling 999 if necessary. This guidance is aligned with the Government’s UK Concussion Guidelines for Non-Elite (Grassroots) Sport.
- **9.5** In specified adult competitions, participants who sustain a head injury or impact but show no signs or symptoms of concussion may be temporarily replaced for medical assessment and may only return to field of play if assessed and permitted in accordance with the protocols that apply to those competitions which are as follows:
 - **a.** Prem, Prem Rugby Cup and U18 Academy League Matches: the protocol set out in the applicable Prem and U18 Academy League Regulations.
 - **b.** Champ Rugby Matches: the protocol set out in the Champ Rugby Regulations.
 - **c.** Premiership Women’s Rugby Matches: the protocol set out in the Premiership Women’s Rugby Regulations.
- **9.6** In respect of all other adult and age grade matches or training sessions, the Recognise and Remove principle should be applied. Participants and all those involved (including coaches, players, parents and club officials) should refer to the RFU Headcase guidance, especially the Graduated Return to Activity and Sport (GRAS) programme, set out in www.englandrugby.com/headcase for guidance on prevention, recognition, management and returning to play. All players, coaches, parents, match officials and club officials should familiarise themselves with this RFU Headcase guidance. This guidance is aligned with the Government’s UK Concussion Guidelines for Non-Elite (Grassroots) Sport.

Goggles

- **9.7** Subject to the extra conditions specified for Age Grade players by RFU Regulation 15.10, players are permitted to wear specifically designed sports goggles in all forms of contact rugby where the following conditions are satisfied:
 - **a.** the sports goggles must be dispensed by a General Optical Council (“GOC”) registered dispensing optician or an optometrist registered with the GOC; and
 - **b.** the player must have written confirmation from the registered dispensing optician or optometrist that:
 - **i.** the goggles are required to correct the vision of the player or are required to protect the player’s eyes due to a medical or optical condition, to enable the playing of rugby union; and
 - **ii.** the goggles do not substantially restrict any normal field of vision and are suitable for use in evasion contact sports; and
 - **iii.** the goggles do not constitute a physical danger to the player or other players; and
 - **iv.** the player is not capable of wearing contact lenses and why this is the case.
- **9.8** Clubs must report any injuries caused as a result of the sports goggles to the RFU Community Medical Team by emailing sportsinjuriesadmin@rfu.com and the player must report the injury to the dispensing optician or optometrist who prescribed the goggles.
- *Note: If an optician/optometrist is registered with the GOC they will be listed on the GOC’s list of registered members which is available at www.optical.org. Please check the list by inserting the name of the individual optician/optometrist.*

Reporting Injuries

- **9.9** Club officials and those involved in arranging any rugby activity must ensure that any injury which results in an individual being admitted overnight to hospital (save those initially taken to an Accident & Emergency Department, but subsequently sent home after treatment) and any death occurring during rugby activity, or within 6 hours of the game or training ending, is reported to the RFU in accordance with the RFU’s Injury Reporting System; details are at: www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe
- *Note: For further information on how the RFU and/or the Injured Players Foundation may be able to assist a seriously/catastrophically injured player and their family, please see www.rfuipf.org.uk.*

Health Care Workers

- **9.10** No person may directly or indirectly seek in any way to influence a medical professional or health care worker to breach their professional group's code of ethics, code of conduct or other such code. For avoidance of doubt, professional codes of ethics take precedence over any employer/employee contract or other service agreement.

Additional Regulations

- **9.11** Additional medical and player safety regulations may be applicable in relation to certain competitions. Those teams involved in such competitions should check the specific competition regulations to ensure that these additional regulations are complied with.
- **9.12** There is further information regarding Age Grade Player safety in the Guidance to RFU Regulation 15 which can be found at:
<https://www.englandrugby.com/governance/rules-and-regulations/regulations>
- **Last Updated: 31 Jul 2025**
- Effective from Friday 1st August 2025.