

“Rugby injuries and prevention strategies”

Rugby is a fast-moving and high intensity team sport. Most teams are now in training, and are starting competition over the next few weeks. It is a sport with a high injury rate, although with physio input and sensible rule changes, that rate is dropping. Let's have a look at some injury statistics, and discuss what can be done to help further.

As many as 1 in 4 rugby players will be injured during the season. On average each player performs up to 20-40 tackles per match. **Approximately half of all injuries occur while a player is tackling or being tackled.**

Other factors that injury analysis show are risk factors include:

- ◆ A lower ranked or **less skilled team** within the division. Almost 25% of neck injuries occur when there is a mismatch in experience between the two opposing front rows.
- ◆ a **forward position**
- ◆ **beginning of the season.** This suggests that pre-season conditioning could reduce injuries. Physiotherapy can play a large role.
- ◆ Most injuries are experienced by 10-18 year olds.
- ◆ More injuries occur during matches (57%) than in training, and more often in the second half of the game .

Injury prevention strategies to reduce the incidence and severity of rugby injuries include coaching on defensive skills, correct tackling technique, correct falling technique and methods to minimize the absorption of impact forces .

To reduce scrummaging injuries at lower rugby levels, props should crouch, touch, pause and then engage. This technique is called Depowering the Scrum. Another alternative is Sequential Engagement where the front rows engage first and then the second row joins in, so that a stable scrum is established.



Many injuries are those that linger through the season, or are exacerbations of previous problems. Physiotherapy can sort these injuries out now so that your chances of playing an uninterrupted season are much higher.

Joke of the Day

The QLD Reds rugby side were playing the NSW Waratahs. After the half-time whistle blew they found themselves ahead 50-0, Will Genia getting eight tries. The rest of the team decided to head for the pub instead of playing the second half, leaving Will Genia to go out on his own. "No worries," Genia told them, "I'll join you later and tell you what happened." After the game Genia headed for the pub where he told his teammates the final score: 95-5. "What!!!!" said a furious Scott Higgenbotham, "How did you let them get 5 points??!"

Genia replied apologetically, "I was sent off with 10 minutes to go."