



IRFU All Ireland League Concussion Reporting Process & Follow up

The IRFU places great importance on player welfare. The IRFU has produced protocols for the management of concussion and suspected concussion in the amateur game. Players removed with concussion or suspected concussion who have not been cleared to play by a doctor, must follow the 21 day return to play protocol (RTP) for an adult and 23 days if 19 years old or younger. The IRFU runs a system that monitors adherence to the return to play protocol by players in the All-Ireland League.

Under law 3 the referee has the power to remove a player from play if they suspect the player has suffered a concussion. The player cannot return to play on that day. The IRFU has provided training for referees and encourages them to use their power under law 3.12 if they suspect a player has suffered a concussion. The referee will clearly communicate to the team that this is the reason for the players removal.

Referees report suspected concussions in AIL matches using SurveyMonkey. The referee provides the following information to the IRFU within two days of the match:

- Name and player ID
- Name of club
- Date of match
- Mechanism of injury
- Was a doctor or physio present
- Who removed the player from the field of play
- A description of the event

An e-mail is sent to the club medical contact where available alerting them to the fact that the player has been registered as suffering from a suspected concussion and that they must enter the GRTP. If there are two medical contacts (e.g. doc and physio) present then the email is sent to both. The Director of Rugby and Honorary secretary should be cc'd. if there is no medical contacts the emails is sent only to the Director of Rugby and Honorary secretary.

The purpose of this email is to ensure that the club are fully aware of the following:

- That the player has been reported by the referee to have suffered a suspected concussion and was removed from play for this reason.
- This player must enter the GRTP protocol and cannot play for 21 days (adult), 23 days (U20).

Accompanying the initial email to the club medic is:

- Copy of referees report.
- Document that outlines the process that the club must follow if they believe that the player has not suffered from a suspect concussion.



Review of the Suspicion of Concussion

If the club believes the player has not suffered from a concussion, in order that the player does not have to enter the GRTP the club must produce a letter from a registered medical doctor, who has seen the player **within 48 hours of the event**, on headed paper and a completed checklist.

The player must have a SCAT5 completed post game as part of the assessment by the team doctor or physiotherapist.

The letter should state that in the doctors opinion the player has not been concussed and it is safe for them to RTP.

The following should be made available to the doctor who is asked to clear a player who has been removed by the referee with a suspected concussion:

- The referees report (from the initial email)
- All AIL matches are videoed and therefore the event should be available for review by the doctor.
- Any relevant information from the club physiotherapist or person who witnessed the event or managed the player at the time.

The SCAT5 tool is the recommended tool for assessing suspected concussion and the following should be considered:

“Furthermore evolving and delayed-onset symptoms of sports related concussion are well documented and highlight the need to consider follow-up serial evaluation after a suspected sports related concussion regardless of a negative side-line screening test or normal early evaluation” (Consensus statement on concussion in sport—the 5th International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Berlin).

All documentation (doctors letter, video, assessments on day of event.... etc) should be sent to the Medical Department Coordinator at mairead.liston@irfu.ie by 12pm on the Thursday following the event.

The IRFU medical department will review all documentation and confirm, in writing, whether or not clearance has been given for the player to return to play without following the GRTP.

On receipt of a doctor’s letter if the IRFU considers that the player should still enter the GRTP, they will write to the club outlining the reasons for their decision.

If the club continue to disagree with the IRFU’s decision and wish to appeal it the case will be reviewed by an independent AIL Concussion panel which will consist of:

- lawyer
- medical doctor with experience in SRC in rugby
- member of the IRFU Disciplinary Committee.



Appendix 1

**IRFU All Ireland League
Checklist for Clearing Player Post Removal with Suspected Concussion.**

PLAYER DETAILS			
Surname:		First Name:	
Team:		Playing Position:	
Date of event:		Jersey number:	
Opposing team:			

DOCTOR DETAILS			
Name:			
Practice Address:			
IMC Number:			
Email:		Phone:	

MEDICAL INFORMATION			
Name and contact of Medic at Match			
Role	Doctor / Physiotherapist / Other (please specify)		
	YES	NO	
SCAT 5 completed post game			Normal Abnormal
Referees Report reviewed			
Witness collateral history taken			
Game Video reviewed			Interpretation:
Checklist, ensure you have included the following:			
1. Dated letter of Clearance on headed paper			<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Post injury SCAT 5			<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Video Clip of incident			<input type="checkbox"/>