



## 2020 Blue Card Q & A Document

### The Pilot

**Q: What happened during the initial pilot of the Blue Card in 2019?**

A: In 2019, 9 Blue Cards were issued in the 2019 program, of those, 2 were assessed by a Medical Professional as not having sustained a concussion. The average time between the assessment of the Blue Card and returning to play was 10 days.

### Application of the Blue Card

**Q: What completions is the Blue Card being applied to?**

A: The Blue Card will be applied to all Junior and Senior 7s and 15s competitions in Ontario. This includes all U14 through Senior matches where a match official is assigned through SportLomo.

**Q: Will the Blue Card be applied to non-Rugby Ontario sanctioned events (university, college, high school)?**

A: The Blue Card will only be applied to events sanctioned by Rugby Ontario that involves registered members. The Blue Card initiative will not apply to high school, college or university events. It is encouraged to report any suspected concussions to Rugby Ontario which are sustained outside of club rugby.

**Q: Will the Blue Card Protocol apply to 7s Rugby?**

A: Yes, it will be in place for all Senior and Junior rugby including 7s.

**Q: Are other Provincial Unions implementing the Blue Card?**

A: No, other provincial unions will not be implementing the Blue Card. Rugby Canada is working with and supporting the roll out of the Blue Card in Ontario. There are plans to roll out the Blue Card initiative across Canada in the future.

### On Field Procedure

**What is the responsibility of those involved in a rugby game (player, coach, match official medical personnel, etc.) within the Blue Card protocol?**

It is the responsibility of all participants in a match to recognize and remove athletes with a suspected concussion. The only additional requirements on the match official is to show the Blue Card if it is appropriate to do so and submit the report post-match identifying the player(s) who received the Blue Card.

**Q: Why is the match official responsible for reporting the Blue Card?**

A: The match official already has the capacity to report as they have functions built into SportLomo to submit Discipline Reports for yellow and red cards. The Blue Card simply adds a reporting function so that they are able to notify Rugby Ontario easily. Rugby Ontario then initiates the Return to Play Protocol (RTTP). We are looking at ways for individuals to report a player with a suspected concussion within SportLomo.



**Q: Will an assistant referee have an option to provide opinion of a concussion? What about volunteers who step into the role?**

A: It is the responsibility of all participants in a match to recognize and remove athletes. The only additional requirements on the match official is to show the Blue Card and submit the report post-match.

**Q: Can club referees issue Blue Cards?**

A: Yes, club referees can issue Blue Cards. Rugby Ontario will be tracking and auditing club referees to ensure that they are all registered (and have thus acknowledged the Rowan's Law materials and completed the World Rugby Concussion Management for the General Public Module). Rugby Ontario is looking into report mechanisms for club referees to report Blue Cards being issued to Rugby Ontario. If a club referee is not able to do so via SportLomo, they should notify David Bushell ([dbushell@rugbyontario.com](mailto:dbushell@rugbyontario.com)) as soon as possible after the match so that the Blue Card Protocol can be initiated.

**Q: Can medical personnel diagnose concussions?**

A: Medical personnel can remove a player from a game if they believe the athlete has sustained a concussion and should communicate this to the official when appropriate. No one can conduct a Head Injury Assessment (HIA), there are no HIAs in club rugby in Canada. Only a Medical Doctor or Nurse Practitioner can diagnose a concussion.

**Q: Are medical personnel able to use head check to do our sideline assessment and log symptoms/SCAT5 responses?**

A: There is no Head Injury Assessment (HIA) on the side of a rugby field. When in doubt, sit them out. If you recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion remove the athlete from the field and ensure they visit a medical professional and follow the Graduated Return to Play protocol.

**Q: Can staff from the other team recognize and remove a player with a suspected concussion?**

A: Yes, staff from the opposing team can identify a player with a suspected concussion. Match officials are asked to record and provide as much information to Rugby Ontario regarding who was involved in the issuing of a Blue Card. The goal of this program is to encourage safety, any actions to take advantage for the purposes of competition are strongly discouraged.

**Q: What happens if the player/coach do not think the player is concussed and do not want to leave the field?**

A: We strongly encourage the community to err on the side of caution when it comes to suspected concussions. When in doubt, sit them out. We also encourage players, coaches, match officials or other members to contact Rugby Ontario if they experience difficulties in issuing a Blue Card. The Blue Card Protocol requires everyone involved in rugby to put player safety first. Any individual who is found to have breached the policies around the Blue Card will be subject to Rugby Ontario's Schedule of Sanctions.



**Q: When a player is sent off by Blue Card, can they be replaced by a player already substituted off?**

A: Yes, a player who receives a Blue Card may be replaced by any player regardless of if they were tactically substituted or not.

### **Off-Field Procedure**

**Q: Has there been any updates to the Graduated Return to Play (GRTP) Protocol?**

A: There have been small changes to the Return to Play protocol used last season. See Appendix A for the most up to date GRTP protocol.

**Q: Will the match official know if a player has Blue Card prior to a match?**

A: No, it is the responsibility of the individual and the club to ensure a player does not play while inactive. The player will not be able to be placed on team sheets in SportLomo. If a player plays while inactive it will result in penalties being applied to the individual and Member involved.

**Q: What training are match officials receiving?**

A: Rugby Ontario will hold further education for match officials on the Blue Card Protocol and recognizing symptoms of a concussion. Further education will be provided throughout the season as needed.

**Q: Why does the submission of a Medical Clearance Letter need to be made at 5pm two days prior to a match?**

A: The purpose of the two-day requirement is to ensure that players go through stage 5 of the Graduated Return to Play Protocol (full contact practice) prior to participating in a match.

**Q: What is the definition of a medical professional?**

A: A medical professional is a Medical Doctor (MD) or a Nurse practitioner (NP).

**Q: Will match officials be provided with Blue Cards or do they need to source their own?**

A: Yes, Blue Cards will be issued to all referees. Details of distribution will be shared once regular rugby activities continue.

### **Reporting Process**

**Q: Is there a maximum number of Blue Cards a player can receive in a season?**

A: There is not a limit to how many Blue Cards a player can receive in a season at this time. We will be working with medical professionals to assist in identifying how many blue cards a player can receive in a season when it relates to player safety.

**Q: What can be done if a player is suspected of a concussion outside of a match?**

A: Individuals who believe a player has a suspected concussion outside of a sanctioned match should notify Jamie Holmes at [jholmes@rugbyontario.com](mailto:jholmes@rugbyontario.com) as soon as possible to ensure the off-field procedure can be initiated retroactively.



**Q: How do we know if a player received a concussion outside of rugby?**

A: At this time there is no Ontario wide database across sports. It is best practice to check in with your athletes prior to a practice or a match to ensure they do not have any injuries including symptoms of a concussion. Please notify Jamie Holmes at [jholmes@rugbyontario.com](mailto:jholmes@rugbyontario.com) as soon as possible to ensure the off-field procedure can be initiated retroactively should a player have a suspected concussion from outside of rugby.

**Q: If a player obtains a suspected concussion at a practice should this be reported to Rugby Ontario to be put into the system, as well as being monitored by the club?**

A: Yes, individuals who believe a player has a suspected concussion outside of a sanctioned match should notify Jamie Holmes at [jholmes@rugbyontario.com](mailto:jholmes@rugbyontario.com) as soon as possible to ensure the off-field procedure can be initiated retroactively.

**Q: If a player is not removed from a game but begins to show symptoms of a concussion after a game, at home for example, and this is communicated to club coaches, should that also be reported to Rugby Ontario?**

A: Yes, individuals who believe a player has a suspected concussion outside of a sanctioned match should notify Jamie Holmes at [jholmes@rugbyontario.com](mailto:jholmes@rugbyontario.com) as soon as possible to ensure the off-field procedure can be initiated retroactively.

**Q: If a coach takes a player off the field due to a suspected concussion should this be communicated to the match official to be correctly entered into Sportlomo as a Blue Card?**

Yes, if a player is removed from the field of play for a suspected concussion the match official should be notified to ensure the injury report is entered into SportLomo. Should the match official not receive the information notify Jamie Holmes at [jholmes@rugbyontario.com](mailto:jholmes@rugbyontario.com) as soon as possible to ensure the off-field procedure can be initiated retroactively.

**Q: If training staff removes a player and Blue Card is not issued, do they have to submit the same paperwork for clearance to RO?**

A: If someone other than the match official removes a player for a suspected concussion, they should notify the match official. Should a match official have already left the field and a player has a suspected concussion that has not been reported the individual notify Jamie Holmes at [jholmes@rugbyontario.com](mailto:jholmes@rugbyontario.com) as soon as possible to ensure the off-field procedure can be initiated retroactively.

**Q: What is in place to ensure a player doesn't return during a tournament?**

A: Team representatives are responsible for ensuring that any of their players who have a suspected concussion do not return to play in a tournament. Additionally, tournament organizers should have a reporting procedure for the Blue Card.

**Q: Will notification be sent to a club if a player is suspected of or diagnosed with a concussion during a provincial or national match?**

A: Yes, clubs will be informed of any Blue Cards issued to players in Provincial programs including training and matches.



**Q: Can we share medical information of an athlete with a suspected concussion?**

A: Every registered participant must agree/adhere to the *Participation Agreement and Release of Liability* by registering with Rugby Canada's national registration platform. It reads: 'I understand and agree that my (or my child's) personal information may be collected, used and disclosed by Rugby Canada, and/or its third-party service providers, in accordance with any Rugby Canada privacy policy. I also understand and agree that my and/or my child's information will be accessed by **SportLoMo**, to provide information to my (or my child's) club, province/territory and national governing body.'

**Q: Will there be spotters to identify players with a suspected concussion at rugby games across the province?**

A: There will not be mandatory spotters at games, but if the club or team would like to arrange for a spotter to assist in the recognition and removal of an athlete, they are free to do so.

**Additional Questions**

**Q: Is there a mechanism in place to track medical personnel and whether they have done their concussion education?**

A: All medical personnel should register with their club/ Rugby Ontario. During the registration process individuals are required to acknowledge that they have completed the concussion education requirements of Rowan's Law and complete the World Rugby Concussion Management for the General Public online module. Additionally, Rugby Ontario staff audit team sheets throughout the season to ensure that both coaches and medical personnel are listed on the team sheet. If member of the medical personnel is not registered; Rugby Ontario will follow up with the individual and their club to ensure that they register as soon as possible.

**Q: Will the World Rugby First Aid in Rugby course be a required course on registration?**

A: At this time only the only World Rugby Modules that are mandatory are Rugby Ready and Concussion Management for the General Public and are required to be completed annually by all coaches and match officials. Match officials are also required to complete the Laws of the Game module.

**Q: What is the requirement for medical personnel at sanctioned junior and senior rugby games across Ontario?**

A: As per policy 3.6.1 *Prior to the start of a match played under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario, both the home and away teams must have present a person who has completed within the past 12 months the World Rugby Concussion Management for the General Public Certificate and First Aid In Rugby Certificate. Both teams must identify this person to the other team and the match officials. The names of these people shall be recorded as the designated medical personal on the Rugby Ontario Game Sheet.*

**Q: Where can I go for more information about the Blue Card?**

A: Visit the Blue Card section of the Rugby Ontario Website: [www.rugbyontario.com/bluecard/](http://www.rugbyontario.com/bluecard/)