



BLUE CARD 2019 PILOT - Q & A

WHICH LEAGUES

- Q. At what levels of rugby is the Blue Card Initiative being piloted?
- A. In 2019, the Blue Card initiative will apply in Marshall, OWL, McCormick Cup and OWL Cup 1st team matches. Subject to review following the 2019 season, the intention in 2020 is to introduce the Blue Card initiative widely across leagues under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario.
- Q. Why were the Marshall and OWL leagues chosen for the pilot?
- A. Being the top levels of club rugby in Ontario, the Marshall and the OWL Leagues have a high level of coaches, match officials and medical support staff.

ON MATCH DAY

- Q. If a player is issued a Blue Card can they get assessed on the sideline with a view to returning to the field of Play?
- A. In accordance with World Rugby and Rugby Canada direction, there is no sideline head injury assessment (HIA) process at any level of rugby in Canada below international level. Once a player is issued a blue card and removed from the field of play, they may not return to play that day under any circumstances.
- Q. Can a coach or manager ask for a player to be blue carded? Can this be done for their own team or opposition?
- A. A blue card can only be issued on the field, by a match official.

- Q. Can a player issued with a Blue Card be replaced?
- A. A player issued a Blue Card may be replaced. Furthermore, a tactically replaced player may return to play to replace a player who has been issued a Blue Card.
- Q. Can a player be blue carded retrospectively (post-match)?
- A. A Blue Card can only be issued on the field, by the match official. If, after the conclusion of the match, the player starts to show signs or symptoms of a concussion the expectation is that the player, with the support of Club medical staff, coaches and officials, would report the situation to Rugby Ontario, get the player to see a doctor and if necessary undertake the World Rugby Graduated Return to Play (GRTP) program.

POST MATCH DAY - MEDICAL

- Q. Who can provide a medical assessment or medical clearance?
- A. The types of medical doctors that are qualified to evaluate patients with a suspected concussion include pediatricians; family medicine, sports medicine, emergency department, internal medicine and rehabilitation (physiatrists) physicians; neurologists; and neurosurgeons. In geographic regions of Canada with limited access to medical doctors (i.e. rural or northern communities), a licensed healthcare professional (i.e. nurse) with pre-arranged access to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner can facilitate this role.
- Q. Can I get the medical assessment letter or medical clearance letter completed by a physiotherapist or athletic therapist?
- A. Whilst the role of the any medical staff present on match day (e.g. athletic therapists, physiotherapists) is vital in the recognize and remove procedures for any player with a suspected

concussion, among licensed healthcare professionals, only medical doctors and nurse practitioners are qualified to conduct a comprehensive medical assessment and provide a concussion diagnosis in Canada. The types of medical doctors qualified to do such an evaluation are: pediatricians; family medicine, sports medicine, emergency department and rehabilitation (physiatrists) physicians; neurologists; and neurosurgeons. (Source – Parachute Canada - Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport).

- Q. If a player is blue carded and is subsequently not diagnosed with concussion by a doctor, is the player able to immediately return to play/training?
- A. A Blue Carded player must seek medical attention, ideally 24 to 48 hours after the match. If the doctor, through completing and signing the Rugby Ontario Medical Assessment Letter indicates that the player has not been diagnosed with a concussion, the player may return to play/training.
- Q. In complying with the Blue Card and GRTP protocols to obtain an assessment and/or medical clearance, are any medical expenses incurred covered under the Rugby Canada National Insurance program?
- A. Any costs not be covered by OHIP or the player's personal medical insurance are the responsibility of the player.

POST MATCH DAY – OTHER

- Q. Is anyone individually responsible if a player is not issued a blue card and is subsequently found to have been concussed?
- A. The Blue Card Initiative has been introduced to enhance player safety and welfare. Player safety and welfare is the joint responsibility of everyone involved in the match - players, coaches, match officials and medical staff.
- Q. What happens if a player issued a Blue Card returns to play prior to obtaining and providing Rugby Ontario with a medical clearance?
- A. Both the Club (through match forfeiture and a fine) and the player (through suspension) may be sanctioned in accordance with the Rugby Ontario Schedule of Sanctions.
- Q. Can a player be issued with a Blue Card by his coach or Club (for instance, from a training incident)?
- A. A Blue Card can only be issued on the field, by a match official. However, if a player suffers a concussion outside the match environment (e.g. at training, playing another sport) the expectation is that the player, with the support of Club medical staff, coaches and officials, would report the situation to Rugby Ontario, get the player to see a doctor and if necessary undertake the World Rugby Graduated Return to Play (GRTP) program.

For full information on Rugby Ontario's Blue Card Initiative please go to www.rugbyontario.com/bluecard