



## **Game Management Guidelines for Youth and School Rugby**

This checklist is to support and guide coaches and referees to take the necessary steps to minimise the risk of injury in rugby games.

The following recommendations are to be used in the context of player safety so please use them for the purpose that they have been created. They are designed to identify potential mismatches between teams and/or individual players that could increase the risk of serious injury and manage these situations to reduce this risk.

Mismatches may occur in any match and may be most relevant, but not exclusive, to matches that are one sided with the final result never in doubt.

### **Week prior to match – coaches to discuss**

1. Ensure both teams are following age grade law variations.
2. Current form of the team / results to date. Previous encounters between the teams.
3. Experience of the team at this age band e.g. most of the boy's first year at this age band or experienced as played together last year.
4. Ability and expectation of squad e.g. strong squad who will push for honours and have a number of representative players or struggling to get enough players to get a team on the park.
5. If possible, discuss some of the detail in Game Day section.

### **Day and morning prior to match – coaches**

1. Check pitch conditions, if relevant, and keep opposition coach and referee informed

### **Game day – coaches to discuss**

1. Revisit and confirm ability and expectation of squad.
2. Focus on forward pack and specifically front row, checking the following:
  - a. Experience of forward pack and, in particular, front row e.g. new props or hooker playing 1<sup>st</sup> season.
  - b. Any outstanding players in the pack and front row who are big, powerful, physical, on strength and conditioning programmes etc and possibly age grade international or representative players in the pack and front row
3. Discuss how game could be managed if mismatches that could increase the risk of injury have been highlighted or could be when game underway (particularly relevant if it looks like game will be one sided).
4. Options to consider for managing mismatches:
5. In a one-sided match – opportunity to include all squad players e.g. fringe players, try some players at different positions or combinations e.g. new 9 and 10 combination, strong prop in the back row.
6. Scrum/front row totally dominant – instruct players to compete safely, opportunity to try fringe front row players, go to uncontested scrums etc.
7. Agree to have half-time when score reaches a certain amount. Potential to mix players at a certain score etc.
8. **Coaches may feel more comfortable informing referee of strengths / weaknesses etc rather than opposition coach so vital that each coach informs referee of potential mismatches that may increase risk of injury and discuss how to manage.**

### **Game day – referee to discuss**

1. **Referee to prompt each coach with the above to identify potential mismatches that could increase risk and discuss potential changes to manage these prior to kick-off or during match if they become apparent.**

### **Half-time – coaches and referee to discuss**

1. Coaches and referee to discuss any mismatches that have become apparent & the management of these.