

# **EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA RUGBY UNION**

A Member of the Mid-Atlantic and USA Rugby Football Unions

<http://www.epru.org>



## **SAFER RUGBY PROGRAM**

**REVISION 1 – ISSUED for USE  
DECEMBER 2008**

Comments and suggestions for the improvement of this program are both welcome and encouraged and should be sent to the EPRU President at [president@epru.org](mailto:president@epru.org).

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### Introduction

Rugby is a strenuous physical contact game incorporating running, handling, kicking, contact and risks. Responsibility for being prepared to play is shared among the administrators, coaches, referees, and most importantly, the participant.

“It all begins with the coaches...as they are the most important key in lowering the chance of injury. It is a day-to-day, season-to-season responsibility. **Care** about kids - **Continually** care about kids - and that will give you **Credibility**. They are the three C's of risk management.”

- Dr. Richard Borkowski, EPRU Safety & Risk Management Program

The health and safety of the athlete should be paramount to all involved in rugby. In an effort to support its clubs to this end, the EPRU has created a Safer Rugby Program that contains recommendations and guidelines. While recommendations represent an appropriate level of care, clubs are encouraged to provide enhanced care as based on the requirements set forth by their school and/or club membership.

**The Safer Rugby Program includes these 8 items. Ensure that they are addressed in your program and you are doing everything you can to create a safe playing environment for your athletes!** Refer to <http://www.epru.org/safety/index.php> for completion information.

- Compliance with Requirements and Guidelines Set Forth by USA Rugby**
- Compliance with Safety Guidelines, Recommendations and Policies Set Forth by the EPRU**
- Participation in the IRB Rugby Ready Program**
- Medical Coverage**
- First Aid Kit**
- Emergency Action Plan**
- Medical Treatment Preparedness**
- EPRU Injury Reporting Procedure**

**Safety Resources** – There's a wealth of useful information available. Please look under the “Resources” section at <http://www.epru.org/safety/index.php>.

### The Steps for Safer Rugby.

#### **1. Compliance with Requirements and Guidelines Set Forth by USA Rugby.**

- USA Rugby Membership Dues (CIPP) for the club and all of its members (players, officers, volunteers and coaches) which includes acknowledgement that the player has a medical insurance policy must be in place prior to play in a sanctioned match.
- USA Rugby Coach Development Program (CDP) Certification for all coaches. Certification process includes taking PREPARE (safety course) which identifies specific duties for coaches in the area of player safety. USA Rugby has partnered with the National Center for Sports Safety to include PREPARE, an online sports safety course, as a component of its new coaching certification. PREPARE consists of seven modules aimed at providing information on how to prevent injuries and respond to emergency situations. For more information on PREPARE as well as Sports Safety Info please go to <http://www.sportssafety.org/>. This course is part of the USA Rugby Coaching Certification process.
- USA Rugby has important information that can be found in the Medical and Safety section at <http://www.usarugby.org>.

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### 2. Compliance with Safety Guidelines, Recommendations and Policies Set Forth by the EPRU.

- Policies, Rules and Procedures are set forth online at <http://www.epru.org>.
- The **Safety and Risk Management** section is found at <http://www.epru.org/safety/index.php>.
- “*Making Rugby Safer*” is found under “Rugby Safety Docs” at <http://www.epru.org/safety/index.php>.
- *Safer Rugby News*. This newsletter is dedicated to providing tips, guidance, information, etc. that teams can easily use to better their safety preparation for their players. A link to all issues can be found at <http://www.epru.org/safety/index.php>.
- **Codes of Conduct** – The EPRU expects compliance from match officials, players, coaches and supporters (<http://www.epru.org/forms/pdfs/conduct.pdf>).
- **Coaches Code of Conduct** – In an effort to raise the standards and quality of play and player behavior as well as improve the image of the sport of rugby, every high school and collegiate coach is expected to sign and abide by the EPRU Coaches Code of Conduct ([http://www.epru.org/forms/pdfs/conduct\\_coach.pdf](http://www.epru.org/forms/pdfs/conduct_coach.pdf)). This Code is based on the premise that rugby should be an integral part of the education process of the student-athlete and that coaches are, above all, teachers with an ethical duty to enhance the physical, mental, social and moral development of student-athletes and teach them positive life skills that will help them become personally successful and socially responsible.

### 3. Participation in the IRB Rugby Ready Program.

“The International Rugby Board’s (IRB) Rugby Ready Program has been launched to educate, aid and support players, coaches, match officials and Unions on the importance of proper preparation for training and playing so that players enjoy rugby to the fullest while reducing the risk of injury. We all have a collective responsibility to manage the welfare of the growing number of men, women and children playing rugby around the world and to ensure that the game continues to be played with a sense of fair play which is central to its global appeal and core values.” – Syd Millar, IRB Chairman

This program reviews and educates on the health and safety aspects of the game of rugby. This program follows in the footsteps of the Rugby Smart and Smart Rugby programs successfully delivered in New Zealand and Australia and is intended to provide a global education resource for the game's stakeholders in the important areas of discipline, match preparation, correct technique, injury prevention and injury management. Check it out at: <http://www.irbrugbyready.com>.

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#### 4. Medical Coverage.

In accordance with the recommendations of USA Rugby Medical & Safety Guide, **a qualified medical person shall be present at rugby matches and practice sessions at all times** for the proper assessment and care of injuries that occur to players. **USA Rugby and the EPRU believe the ideal person for this is a Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC).** The ATC is professionally trained in the assessment and treatment of injuries to players. In lieu of an ATC, a physician, physician assistant or registered nurse, may be suitable for this role.

Each club is responsible for maintaining a medical (first aid) kit that must be brought to all matches. Before the match starts, each host club should have a “medical coordinator” that will carry a cell phone and know the accessibility of emergency medical care - including the phone number of the ambulance corps, police, fire, or rescue unit that will be covering the area as part of their Emergency Action Plan.

The on-site presence of an EMT and/or ambulance is also recommended for handling medical emergencies that based on assessment of the EMT or other qualified medical person requires hospitalization of the injured player as soon as possible. “EMT intervention aims to provide CPR and defibrillation when necessary, control external bleeding, prevent shock, and prevent further injury or disability by immobilizing potential spinal or other bone fractures, while expediting the safe and timely transport of the patient to a hospital emergency department for definitive medical care.”

5. **First Aid Kit** – refer to “The Coach’s First Aid Kit” located in the “Coaching and Safety” articles in the ‘Sports Safe Info’ section of the NCSS website at <http://www.sportssafety.org> for specific recommendations.

#### 6. Emergency Action Plan.

The key to being medically prepared for rugby is to have the proper medical support at both practices and matches. All physical contact games have a potential for serious injury to the player. An Emergency Action Plan should be established for dealing with serious injuries that generally require hospitalization. The key to the Emergency Action Plan is getting professional care to the player as quickly as possible. The Plan shall include directions to the nearest hospital.

This Plan is to be made known to team coaches, school officials, and players' parents. Prior to the start of a match, the home team shall provide a copy of this Plan to the coach of the visiting team.

For development of an EAP refer to the template found under “Rugby Safety Docs” at <http://www.epru.org/safety/index.php> as well as Volume 1, Issues 1 through 5 of the EPRU’s “*Safer Rugby News*”

