



THE HEAD INJURY ASSESSMENT (HIA) PROTOCOL

The HIA Protocol is a 3-stage process that includes an HIA 1 Assessment, HIA 2 Assessment and HIA 3 Assessment. This Protocol has been developed to support the recognition, diagnosis and management of concussion in elite rugby. It is supported by a governance system of checks and controls.

HIA 1

In Stage one of the HIA protocol, the HIA 1 assessment is comprised of four components. They are:

- a) 11 immediate and permanent removal criteria (known as Criteria 1 indications) **AND**
- b) an off-field screening tool **AND**
- c) pitch-side video review **AND**
- d) clinical evaluation by the attending doctor

The HIA1 assessment is therefore **not** limited to the off-field screening tool. Instead, the off-field screening tool is one component of the comprehensive HIA 1 assessment.

If one or more of the 11 Criteria 1 indications are observed a diagnosis of concussion is automatic, the player is immediately and permanently removed from play, and the completion of the off-field screening tool and medical evaluation is **not** required. Any other cases, where players have the potential for concussion (known as Criteria 2 indications), but without clear on-pitch symptoms or signs, undergo an off-field assessment consisting of a medical room clinical evaluation by an attending doctor supported by the screening tool. This screening tool is a re-formatted Sports Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT5), the pitch-side assessment tool recommended by experts from the international concussion consensus meeting.

The HIA 1 assessment includes video support used for the identification of potential head injuries, confirmation of Criteria 1 signs indicating immediate and permanent removal and assistance with return to play decisions.

HIA 2 AND HIA 3

In stage two, every player entering into the HIA protocol undergoes a medical evaluation (using the HIA2 clinical assessment) within three hours of completing the match, to assess clinical progress and determine an early diagnosis of concussion.

In stage three, further medical testing is performed using the HIA 3 after two night's rest (36-48 hours post-head impact event) to further assess clinical progress and determine a late diagnosis of concussion.

Players presenting after the game with delayed symptoms or signs suspicious for concussion, can enter the HIA protocol at a later stage (stage 2 or 3) and undergo HIA 2 and/or HIA 3 assessments as appropriate.

The HIA protocol for assessing players with the potential for concussion was formulated following a review of all available scientific evidence and in consultation with concussion experts, sports medicine doctors, coaches, players and referees. The HIA protocol is subject to continual review and development by a working group of independent experts advising World Rugby. A detailed training programme has been developed for all medical staff involved in the HIA protocol. Formal audit, governance and disciplinary processes are in place to monitor and manage the HIA protocol. An ongoing programme of research is also conducted to continually improve its effectiveness.

SUMMARY

The Head Injury Assessment (HIA) is a three-point in time process and includes:

HIA 1 containing

- Criteria 1 – indications for immediate and permanent removal from a match
- An off-field assessment including symptom checklist, medical evaluation, balance assessment and cognitive tests performed by a doctor
- Video review
- Clinical evaluation by the treating doctor

HIA 2

- A repeat medical evaluation performed by the doctor within 3 hours of the incident
- Assists in an early diagnosis of concussion

HIA 3

- A further medical evaluation performed 48-72 hours after the incident
- Assists with the late diagnosis of concussion