

INFORMED CONSENT TO PLAY CONTACT RUGBY UNION

Aberdeen Grammar Rugby are an open inclusive sports club, run on a non-profit basis by a company limited by guarantee (Aberdeen Rugby Ltd.). It is our purpose to provide access to rugby for all and our age range spans from 4yrs old to members in their 80's. It is always our intention to provide a safe environment for all persons, be they players, spectators, parents or visitors. We are also involved in delivering rugby in multiple schools in Aberdeen as well as the Universities.

Within our youth section we have encouraged girls to partake in rugby for decades and our current club plan is to see girl's rugby continue through to adult rugby and field girls' and women's teams on a regular competitive basis.

Playing sport and learning team skills, leadership, responsibility and forming friendship groups are proven to help develop young people, as well as building fitness and wellbeing. This continues through childhood into adulthood and can also have a positive mental health impact on individuals throughout their lives. As with all forms of contact sport, and indeed non-contact sport, such as equestrian events and cycling, there is a degree of risk from injury by participating in these events. We can mitigate against risk to a certain degree by applying rules in the games and adapting them to agreed age band grades, **but risk cannot be entirely excluded.**

Given recent media coverage of rugby players being diagnosed with brain disorders and neurological conditions, such as early onset dementia and MND, numerous studies have been commissioned by World Rugby and some Unions. These take many years to complete and then report on and the Directors of our company were concerned that there was a gap in current knowledge regarding the potential risk to girls and women competing in contact rugby. A report into the risks of concussive injuries in female rugby was commissioned by the club in August 2022 and subsequent additional material was examined before the final report was completed late September. This report also impacted into the current generic concussion protocols utilised in relation to concussive injuries throughout the game in Scotland and further afield.

The report, compiled by Dr Marshall Garrett, is based on an extensive review of published medical studies regarding concussion and related conditions. The findings have been shared with our current Executive Committee and medical support staff, as well as senior staff at Murrayfield, including both senior medical and legal personnel. There has been a meeting between club officials and the SRU and a further meeting is scheduled for December 2022 to discuss the matter.

In the interim it is our intention as a club to inform all our players and parents/guardians of players under 16 years of age of the specific identified risks of concussive injuries that may occur from engaging in contact rugby (and indeed contact sport in general) and the enhanced risks associated that impact on female players. You are asked to view the concussion protocols on the SRU's website at the following link: <https://scottishrugby.org/rules-and-regulations/player-welfare/medical/concussion/>

An informed risk consent form accompanies this paper and must be signed and returned by the player and countersigned in the case of players aged over 12 but under 16 years on date of signing. Forms for players under the age of 12 must be signed by a parent only. **Forms must be returned to age group coach or the Chairman at g.thomson.t21@btinternet.com, The Lyne, Stobhall, Maryculter AB12 5GJ by 7 Jan. 2023.**

Gordon Thomson

Chairperson, Aberdeen Grammar Rugby

INFORMED CONSENT FORM IN RESPECT OF THE RISK OF CONCUSSIVE INJURY FROM ENGAGING IN CONTACT RUGBY

1.Rugby Union is a physical activity incorporating close physical contact with others and includes tackling, scrummaging, lineouts, mauling and accidental collisions. Such activities carried out under supervision by coaches and/or match officials are an accepted part of the game and participants must be aware that there is a potential risk of physical injury from partaking in the sport. The risks are all mitigated by World Rugby sanctioned rules, which are amended by age banding to further reduce risk and allow the development of players in as safe and healthy a manner as is possible.

2.The Scottish Rugby Union produce concussion guidelines and these must be followed in all circumstances and can be found on the Scottish Rugby website.

3. Aberdeen Grammar Rugby wish every player to be aware of the risk of playing contact rugby as well as parents and guardians of children engaging in the sport. In addition, female participants should be aware that due to their biological sex they have the following additional risks of concussion and concussive symptoms

- i) Increased incidence of concussions by a ratio of approximately 2.1, as compared to males
- ii) increased post concussive symptoms as compared to males, these being headache, dizziness, fatigue, irritability and concentration problems at 3 months post injury. These issues are identified from the age of puberty onwards. Children within mini rugby would appear to be unaffected by these issues.
- iii) The timing of injury in the context of the menstrual cycle can also adversely affect the outcome of a concussive injury and clearly only impacts on female players.
- iv) There appears to be a heightened incidence of anxiety and depression in females as compared to males in the post concussive injury phase.

4. All players should be aware that repeated concussive and sub-concussive injuries must be treated seriously. At least 85% of concussive events pass without any real subsequent symptoms. In a small number of cases symptoms can last over a year and can impact on the ability to concentrate and/or exercise. In a very small number of cases there appears to be a link between repeated concussive/sub-concussive injuries and neurological conditions such as dementia, MND and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy. This area of knowledge will expand rapidly in the next few years and is something that is impacting Association Football, N.F.L. in the U.S.A and other contact sports.

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I	d.o.b.....	SRU Number (if known)
Address		Tel. No.....
.....		Email.....

Have been informed of the risks of playing contact Rugby Union and have considered the information and viewed the current SRU guidelines on Concussion. Having considered the known risks, I wish to play/continue to play contact Rugby Union

Signature of player (if over 12)	Date
Countersignature/Signature of Parent/Guardian	Date