

NRL On-Field Policy - Community



Introduction

Rugby League is a contact sport and, as such, the National Rugby League provides policy direction to ensure the safest possible playing environment across all ages.

As part of a risk management approach to the prevention of, and appropriate attention to, injuries and illness in Rugby League, it is important that adequate and timely first aid is provided as a service to all players.

The NRL's On-field Policy provides for the attendance of appropriately qualified and skilled sports trainers to provide the best care possible for the game's participants. In the same way that coaches and referees are integral to the fabric of the Code, trainers play a significant role in the preparation of, and ongoing care, of players on matchday.

The Game's On-field Policy

Leaguesafe

Leaguesafe is an online injury and illness awareness course and is NOT a trainer qualification or accreditation. It is the minimum requirement for all people who run messages and provide water to players on-field.

No more than two Leaguesafe personnel from any one team can enter the field of play, unless invited by the Referee to do so. Leaguesafe qualification is valid across all age groups from 6's to senior grades.

Level 1 & level 2 Sports Trainers

For all Rugby League matches – from Under 6 to senior grades – there is a requirement that a match may only commence if there is a NRL Level 1 or Level 2 Sports Trainer in attendance.

An accredited NRL Sports Trainer (Level 1 or Level 2) is required for each match at Under 6 to Under 12 age groups, whilst a minimum Level 1 Sports Trainer must be assigned to each junior International and senior team. It is preferred that at least two (2) be available plus at least one (1) Leaguesafe Trainer per team.

*Note - where a centralised model is used in the Under 6 and 7 years age groups, that is, where between 2 and 4 matches are played simultaneously on the one (International size) field, then the minimum requirement is for at least one Level 1 NRL Sports Trainer to be in attendance and on duty for the duration of these matches.

General Notes

- » All official personnel over the age of (14) years who enter the field of play, must possess a minimum of an NRL Leaguesafe Certificate of Completion or an Accredited Sports Trainer Statement of Attainment and an NRLID Number.
- » No person other than a NRL Accredited Level 1 Sports Trainer or Level 2 Sports Trainer, or those with pre-determined NRL acceptance, shall administer first aid or offer advice to an injured / ill player. Personnel with other qualifications must be ratified by the Sport Trainer Education Coordinator and equate with the NRL Sports Trainer Scheme, to receive a Statement of Attainment and an NRLID Number;

- » All injuries / illnesses assessed by the qualified Sports Trainer must be recorded in the NRL Injury Report Booklet;
- » Each player shall complete the NRL Medical Advice Card before his / her first training or playing commitment. This will be the responsibility of the designated Accredited NRL Sports Trainer to ensure all cards are completed and kept up to date. As part of the Club's duty of care, this process should be fully supported by Club Officials. All Privacy Laws must be adhered to;
- » The Accredited NRL Sports Trainer shall, at all times (whilst a game is in progress) be in a position to respond quickly should an injury / illness occur;
- » The Accredited NRL Sports Trainer shall have the final say on whether a player should continue in the game and, subsequently, when to resume playing in the game. If a doctor is on duty at the venue, he / she shall make this decision. Serious injuries requiring a Medical Clearance prior to the resumption of training / playing must be presented to the Club's Accredited NRL Sports Trainer;
- » As a guide; each team may engage and use a maximum of three (3) trainers in the playing area during a game; a maximum of two (2) on the field of play during general play at any one time (unless otherwise sanctioned by the Referee).
- » If an Accredited NRL Level 1 or Level 2 Sports Trainer is not in attendance, the game(s) shall not commence under any circumstances until such (qualified) person is available;
- » Anyone entering the field of play must wear appropriate, enclosed footwear at all times.

The NRL Accredited Sports Trainers are the only On-Field personnel who are to assist and manage an injured or ill player and are identified with the following coloured shirts on match day:

Leaguesafe - Yellow Shirt / Vest (Minimum qualification to enter the field of play)

NOTE: The words NRL LEAGUESAFE must be printed on the back of the shirt/vest.

Access to the field is limited to:

- » When his/her team is in possession to conduct interchange and to administer water only;
- » When a try has been scored;
- » During a "timeout" called by the Referee for an injury;
- » During technical stoppages in play (EXCEPT SCRUMS). On-field personnel are not allowed on the field of play after the Referee has ordered a scrum until the ball has emerged and a team is in possession;
- » Must enter and leave the field of play from an on-side position.

Duties:

- » To administer water
- » To assist in the interchange process
- » To convey messages

NRL Level 1 Sports Trainer – Blue Vest or Shirt

NOTE: Level 1 Trainer to be printed on back of shirt or vest.

Access to the field is unlimited to attend an injured / ill player and to administer water (relevant to all age groups).

Duties:

- » Assist, by observing and monitoring players during play, as well as those who have been removed from the field of play through injury/illness;
- » Assist an injured / ill player on and off the field of play at training and / or a game.

Level 2 Sports Trainer (“Head Trainer”) – Orange Shirt / Vest

NOTE: Level 2 Trainer or HEAD TRAINER to be printed on back of shirt or vest.

Access to the field is unlimited to attend an injured / ill player and to administer water (relevant to all age groups).

Duties:

The Head Trainer will be the most senior person within the NRL Sports Trainer team and will supervise all on-field personnel, including Leaguesafe.

- » The Accredited NRL Head Trainer will make the final decision on a player’s welfare in the absence of a medical professional;
- » Coaches / Administrators / Players must comply with the decision of the NRL Head Trainer at all times;
- » All directions given to on-field personnel by the Head Trainer must be adhered to at all times.
- » The Level 2 Sports Trainer / Head Trainer is the only person of the on-field personnel who may approach a Referee or Touch Judge in relation to player welfare-related concerns; they cannot instruct an official on how to referee a game but only express concerns directly related to player welfare. This is to be done in a respectful manner and only occur during technical stoppages of play. (For example, when a try has been scored or at half-time.) In the absence of a Level 2 Sports Trainer in attendance, the most experienced Level 1 Sports Trainer in attendance may approach a Match Official on a matter of player welfare, however, the same restrictions apply.

All Rugby League trainers acting in an official capacity are bound by the NRL’s On-field Policy and Code of Conduct. For electronic versions of the On-Field Policy and Code of Conduct, go to www.playnrl.com.

NRL On Field Policy – Performance



Performance levels within the game are defined as those competitions not covered under the “Community Policy” above, namely:

- » Tier 1 (Telstra Premiership),
- » Tier 2 (Intrust Super Competitions – NSW and Queensland), and
- » Tier 3 (Ron Massey Cup and Sydney Shield in NSWRL, COLTS and Meninga Cup in the QRL, and Australian Schoolboy/CAS Representative team events.

Following consultation with State Leagues – which operate under the NRL’s Whole of Game On-Field Policy, and with changes to competition frameworks for 2018, there is a need to differentiate between the “community” levels and “performance” levels of the game.

The difference which currently exists between the “Community” NRL On-field Policy and the elite Competition (Telstra Premiership Competition) is that the NRL has determined that Paramedics, Nurses, Doctors and Physiotherapists may act in the capacity of Sports Trainer in elite competitions provided that:

- » Their Paramedic/Nurse/Doctor/Physiotherapy qualifications are current, they are registered with their appropriate professional accreditation body, and they have appropriate medical indemnity insurance; and
- » They undertake mandatory annual training in NRL approved Spinal Injury Management, Concussion, Advanced Resuscitation and CPR.

All trainers in the “elite” or “Performance” levels of the game are expected to undertake training on an annual basis depending on their exact role; this includes NRL/SMA Level 1 and Level 2 Sports Trainers acting in these roles. This additional training is outlined in the matrix below.

It is mandatory that a Medical Practitioner (Doctor) be in attendance at each of the Performance level matches for this On-field policy to apply. This is in addition to any doctor who may choose to be a Head trainer/Orange shirt.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL COMPETITIONS:

Role	Qualifications and Training Required
Head Trainer Identified by an Orange Shirt	PARAMEDIC* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Currency of yearly registration with respective professional bodies required (State-based Ambulance Service); » Must be currently practicing, and full sports insurance coverage required; » Yearly - Provide Emergency Care for a Suspected Spinal Injury (PUAEME004A) provided by SMA; » Yearly - Provide Advanced Resuscitation (HLTAID007) provided by SMA; » Yearly Concussion Module (provided by the NRL) – NRL Elite Head Injury and Concussion Protocols » Yearly CPR Training (HLTAID001)

	<p>PHYSIOTHERAPIST*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Currency of yearly registration with respective professional bodies required; » Must be currently practicing, and full sports insurance coverage required; » Yearly - Provide Emergency Care for a Suspected Spinal Injury (PUAEME004A) provided by SMA; » Yearly – Provide Advanced Resuscitation (HLTAID007) provided by SMA; » Yearly Concussion Module (provided by the NRL) – NRL Elite Head Injury and Concussion Protocols » Yearly CPR Training (HLTAID001)
	<p>DOCTOR*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Currency of yearly registration with respective professional bodies required; » Must be currently practicing, and full sports insurance coverage required; » Yearly - Provide Emergency Care for a Suspected Spinal Injury (PUAEME004A) provided by SMA; » Yearly - Provide Advanced Resuscitation (HLTAID007) provided by SMA; » Yearly Concussion Module (provided by the NRL) – NRL Elite Head Injury and Concussion Protocols » Yearly CPR Training (HLTAID001)
	<p>NURSE*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Currency of yearly registration with respective professional bodies required; » Must be currently practicing, and full sports insurance coverage required; » Yearly - Provide Emergency Care for a Suspected Spinal Injury (PUAEME004A) provided by SMA; » Yearly - Provide Advanced Resuscitation (HLTAID007) provided by SMA; » Yearly Concussion Module (provided by the NRL) – NRL Elite Head Injury and Concussion Protocols » Yearly CPR Training (HLTAID001)
	<p>MINIMUM LEVEL 2 NRL/SMA SPORTS TRAINER QUALIFIED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Yearly - Provide Emergency Care for a Suspected Spinal Injury (PUAEME004A) provided by SMA; » Yearly – Provide Advanced Resuscitation (HLTAID007) provided by SMA; » Yearly Concussion Module (provided by the NRL) – NRL Elite Head Injury and Concussion Protocols » Yearly CPR Training (HLTAID001)
<p>Assistant Medical</p> <p>Identified by a Yellow Shirt</p>	<p>MINIMUM LEVEL 1 NRL/SMA SPORTS TRAINER QUALIFIED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Yearly - Provide Emergency Care for a Suspected Spinal Injury (PUAEME004A) provided by SMA; » Yearly CPR Training (HLATID001) » Yearly Concussion Module (provided by the NRL) – NRL Elite Head Injury and Concussion Protocols

Message and Water Runner Identified by a Blue Shirt	MINIMUM LEVEL 1 NRL/SMA SPORTS TRAINER QUALIFIED » Yearly CPR Training (HLTAID001)
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*Clubs must ensure that all Head Trainers have appropriate Rugby League-specific skills when undertaking this role (e.g. taping, wound management) as not all medical professionals are necessarily well equipped for these specific on-field roles; these are currently included as part of the NRL/SMA Level 2 Sports Trainer Course.