



## ALBERTA RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION CODE OF CONDUCT

Approved by the Board – September 11, 2023

### 1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 The Rugby Alberta Code of Conduct has been developed to provide a safe, positive, and inclusive environment, that is free from all forms of Maltreatment, within Rugby Alberta and all of Rugby Alberta's programs, competitions, events, and activities.
- 1.2 This Code of Conduct is intended to promote a Safe Sport environment in a manner that allows for consistent, immediate, appropriate, and meaningful action should any issues arise, but also to prevent issues from arising by clearly communicating expected standards of behaviour of all participants.
- 1.3 Rugby Alberta supports equal opportunity, prohibits discriminatory practices, and is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals can safely participate in sport and are treated with respect and fairness.
- 1.4 The Code incorporates the key elements of the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS) and aligns with Rugby Canada's Safe Sport policies.

### 2. APPLICATION AND JURISDICTION

- 2.1 The Code of Conduct applies to all registered Members of Rugby Alberta, including organizations, and all individuals participating in any capacity at all programs, competitions, events, and activities owned or sanctioned by Rugby Alberta.
- 2.2 This Code of Conduct applies to all Officers, Directors, Committee members, Workers, volunteers, and interns of Rugby Alberta, as well as all provincial and program coaches, trainers, team managers and medical staff appointed to any Rugby Alberta program, squad, or team.
- 2.3 The Code also applies outside of Rugby Alberta's sanctioned activities or environment when the individual's conduct has a serious and detrimental impact on another individual or could undermine the integrity of Rugby or bring Rugby Alberta into disrepute.
- 2.4 Any Member of Rugby Alberta who violates this Code may be subject to discipline or expulsion in accordance with Rugby Alberta's Bylaws.

### 3. DEFINITIONS



This Code of Conduct adopts [Rugby Canada's Safe Sport Policy Definitions](#), and, as such, may be modified from time to time. In addition, or for application to Rugby Alberta, the following definitions also apply:

**Club:** an organization that is a Sub-Union or Club Member of Rugby Alberta, as defined by Rugby Alberta's Bylaws, and registered with Rugby Canada.

**Committee Member:** a current member of any Board Committee of Rugby Alberta, as defined by Rugby Alberta's Bylaws.

**Concussion (sport-related):** as defined by the most recent [International Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport](#), is a traumatic brain injury induced by biomechanical forces.

**Concussion Recognition Tool:** as defined by the most recent [International Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport](#), is a method to identify concussion in children, adolescents, and adults. See: [Concussion recognition tool 5 \(coach.ca\)](#)

**Director:** a Director of the Rugby Alberta Board, as defined by Rugby Alberta's Bylaws.

**Fit for Duty:** is defined as the physical, mental, and emotional state which enables individuals to perform their job tasks competently and continuously in a manner which does not compromise the integrity of the organization for which they work or create a safety hazard to themselves or others.

**Graduated Return to Sport Strategy Guidelines:** as defined by the most recent [International Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport](#), is a graduated stepwise rehabilitation strategy to safely return to sport following a sport related concussion.

**Individual Member:** an Individual Member of Rugby Alberta, as defined by Rugby Alberta's Bylaws.

**Minor:** any individual under the age of majority as determined by the Government of Alberta.

**Officer:** an Officer of Rugby Alberta, as defined by Rugby Alberta's Bylaws.

**Organization:** is the Alberta Rugby Football Union, commonly referred to as Rugby Alberta.

**Player:** a Player is synonymous with an Athlete, as defined by [Rugby Canada's Safe Sport Policy Definitions](#), as adapted from the UCCMS.

**Recognize and Remove:** as defined by the most recent [International Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport](#), are the first two steps to manage sport related concussion whereby any athlete demonstrating the recognizable signs or symptoms of concussion are removed from participating in physical activity.

#### 4. KEY PRINCIPLES

- 4.1. **Safety** is the top priority at all times. All adult Participants have a legal duty of care and will take the following actions:
- a) If you suspect any form of Maltreatment of a Minor, including, but not limited to, Abuse, Neglect or Grooming, you must report the concern to Alberta's Child Abuse Hotline by phoning 1-800-387-5437 (KIDS). Call 9-1-1 if you or the person you are reporting is in immediate danger.
  - b) If you suspect an injury might be serious, including but not limited to psychological distress, immediately seek medical assistance. If medical assistance is not on-site, call 9-1-1.
  - c) If you believe a Player is showing signs or symptoms of Concussion, immediately remove the Player from physical activity and direct them to seek medical assistance. That individual is not permitted to



partake further in any physical activity in that same day and should not be left alone over the initial few hours after injury.

Furthermore, all Participants are encouraged to:

- d) Understand, identify, and report Maltreatment or signs of Maltreatment in any form by contacting the local police non-emergency line and then report it to Rugby Alberta.
  - e) Enhance the safe play of Rugby by instilling and upholding a culture of safety, injury prevention and fair play.
  - f) Understand the symptoms of Concussion, promote, follow, and support the Recognise and Remove process and the Graduated Return to Sport Strategy Guidelines.
  - g) In the case of individual adults who meet the legal drinking age, take reasonable steps to manage the responsible and safe consumption of alcohol at events associated with Rugby Alberta.
- 4.2. **Integrity** is a core value of Rugby and is upheld through honesty, diligence, and fair play. All individuals will:
- a) Consistently demonstrate the spirit of sportsmanship, sport leadership and ethical behaviour.
  - b) Ensure adherence to the Laws of the Game, sanctioned Law Variations, and the spirit of those Laws.
  - c) Promote and uphold Rugby as a Clean Sport by abstaining from the promotion, endorsement, supply or use of non-medical drugs or the use of performance-enhancing drugs. More specifically, Rugby Alberta adopts and adheres to the [Canadian Policy Against Doping \(CAPD\) in Sport](#). Any infraction under the CAPD shall be considered an infraction of this Code and may be subject to further disciplinary action from Rugby Alberta. Rugby Alberta will enforce any penalty enacted pursuant to a breach of the CAPD.
  - d) Adhere to all federal, provincial, municipal, and host country laws.
  - e) Always comply with Rugby Alberta Bylaws, policies, procedures, rules and regulations, as adopted and amended from time to time.
- 4.3. **Respect** is at the heart of our sport and the Rugby community should have a sense of pride for upholding this core value. All individuals have a responsibility to:
- a) Maintain and enhance the dignity and self-esteem of individuals by treating all individuals fairly and respectfully regardless of body type, physical characteristics, abilities, gender, ancestry, ethnic or racial origin, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, age, marital status, religion, religious belief, political belief, or economic status.
  - b) Focus comments or feedback appropriately and constructively, avoiding criticism of others.
  - c) Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes Maltreatment in any form, including online.
  - d) Refrain from the use of power or authority to coerce another person to engage in inappropriate activities; and
  - e) Respect the property of others and not willfully cause damage.
- 4.4. **Inclusion for all** enables Rugby to build communities, through camaraderie, teamwork and loyalty which offers all individuals a sense of belonging. All individuals have a responsibility to:
- a) Promote the sport of Rugby in the most constructive and positive manner possible.
  - b) Proactively invite and include all people, regardless of age, abilities, gender, ancestry, ethnic or racial origin, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, religious belief, political belief, or economic status.



- c) Upholding safety for all as the top priority, make or provide modifications to make Rugby Alberta competitions, programs, and events accessible for Players and Participants of all abilities.
- d) Upholding safety for all as the top priority, make or provide modifications or exemptions to facilitate mixed-gender play.
- e) Upholding integrity as a top priority, make or provide modifications or exemptions to facilitate the inclusion of players from lower socio-economic households.

## 5. PERSONS IN AUTHORITY

- 5.1. When Participants are a Person in Authority, they are responsible for knowing what constitutes Maltreatment. The categories of Maltreatment are not mutually exclusive, nor are the examples provided in each category an exhaustive list. Rather, what matters for the assessment of the Maltreatment is whether the conduct falls into one or more of the categories, not into which category it falls. Abuse, assault, Harassment, bullying, and hazing can be experienced in more than one category of Maltreatment
- 5.2. Maltreatment can be any of the prohibited behaviors and conduct, provided the Maltreatment occurs in any one or a combination of the following situations (The physical location(s) where the alleged Maltreatment occurred is not determinative):
  - a) Within a sport environment;
  - b) When the Participant alleged to have committed Maltreatment was engaging in sport activities;
  - c) When the Participants involved interacted due to their mutual involvement in sport; or
  - d) Outside of the sport environment where the Maltreatment has a serious and detrimental impact on another Participant.
- 5.3. It is a violation of the Code for Persons in Authority to place Participants in situations that make them vulnerable to Maltreatment. This includes, but is not limited to, instructing a Player and coach to share a hotel room when traveling, hiring a coach who has a history of Maltreatment, assigning coaches or other support staff to a program involving Minor Players when the coach or support staff has a reputation for Maltreatment.

## 6. ACCOUNTABILITY

- 6.1 **Officers, Directors, Committee Members and Workers** are the privileged keepers of our great sport and must uphold the highest standards of ethical behaviour. Therefore, and in addition to Sections 4 and 5 of this Policy, Rugby Alberta's Board of Directors, Committee members and Workers shall:
  - a) Provide leadership by demonstrating and promoting the values and key principles of the Code of Conduct through their decision, actions, and behaviour. Their behaviour must build and inspire the community's trust and confidence in Rugby Alberta.
  - b) Function primarily as an Officer, Director, Committee member or Worker of Rugby Alberta and not act with self-interest or as a representative of any other organization.



- c) Act with honesty and integrity and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Values of Rugby and the responsibilities of Rugby Alberta business, including being Fit for Duty when undertaking their responsibilities.
- d) Conduct themselves openly, professionally, responsibly, lawfully and in good faith in service of Rugby Alberta's mission and goals.
- e) Behave with decorum appropriate to both circumstance and position, and to be fair, equitable, considerate, and honest in all dealings with others.
- f) Exercise the degree of care, diligence, thoughtfulness, skill, and time commitment required in the performance of their duties pursuant to the laws under which Rugby Alberta is incorporated.
- g) Conform to and uphold the Bylaws and Policies approved by Rugby Alberta.
- h) Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes Maltreatment, Discrimination, Harassment, Workplace Harassment or Workplace Violence.

6.2 **Coaches** have many responsibilities. The Coach-Player relationship is a privileged one and plays a critical role in the personal, mental, and athletic development of the Player. Coaches must understand and respect the inherent Power Imbalance that exists in this relationship and must be extremely careful not to abuse it, consciously or unconsciously. In addition to Sections 4 and 5 of this Policy, Coaches will:

- a) Understand, recognize, and respect the inherent Power Imbalance of the Coach-Player relationship, respect the rights of all Participants in sport. This is accomplished by establishing and following procedures for confidentiality (right to privacy), informed participation and fair and reasonable treatment.
- b) Be Fit for Duty when undertaking their responsibilities.
- c) Act in the best interest of the Player's physical, mental, and emotional well-being, for the present and future health of the Player.
- d) Act in the best interest of the Player's development as a whole person, particularly their formal schooling education.
- e) Ensure a safe training and playing environment by selecting activities, training equipment, and establishing controls that are suitable for the age, gender, body type, experience, ability, and fitness level of the involved Players.
- f) Adhere to the policies and procedures of Coaching Association of Canada, as applicable.
- g) Maintain World Rugby's Concussion Management for the General Public certification, educate Players and their parents/guardians on the symptoms of Concussion.
- h) Promote, adhere to, and enforce the Recognize and Remove protocol at all training sessions, training camps and matches. If in doubt, sit them out.
- i) Promote, adhere to, and enforce the Graduated Return to Sport Strategy Guidelines for a Player returning after a suspected or diagnosed Concussion.
- j) At all times display respect towards therapists and medical staff, acting upon their instructions or recommendations that prioritize the short- or long-term wellbeing of the Player.
- k) At all times display respect towards opponents and officials, both in victory and defeat, setting an example and educating Players on the values of Rugby.
- l) Not engage in an intimate or sexual relationship with a Player under 18 years old, or an intimate or sexual relationship with a Player over the age of 18 if the coach is in a position of power, trust, or authority over that Player.



- 6.3 **Team Managers, Therapists, Medical Staff and Support Personnel** have particular and vital responsibilities to ensure the safety and well-being of Players. In addition to Sections 4 and 5 of this Policy, Team Managers, Therapists, Medical Staff and Support Personnel will:
- Understand, recognize, and respect the inherent Power Imbalance of the Coach-Player relationship, and, as appropriate, protect the Player's privacy.
  - Be Fit for Duty when undertaking their responsibilities.
  - Act in the best interest of the Player's physical, mental and emotional well-being.
  - Maintain World Rugby's Concussion Management for Doctors and Health Care Professionals certification every two years, if engaged as a therapist or medical staff.
  - Maintain World Rugby's Concussion Management for the General Public certification if engaged as team manager or support personnel (where applicable).
  - Promote, adhere to, and enforce the Recognize and Remove protocol at all training sessions, training camps and matches. If in doubt, sit them out.
  - Promote, adhere to, and enforce the Graduated Return to Sport Strategy Guidelines for a Player returning after a suspected or diagnosed Concussion.
  - Not engage in an intimate or sexual relationship with a Player under 18 years old, or an intimate or sexual relationship with a Player over the age of 18 if the coach is in a position of power, trust, or authority over that Player.
- 6.4 **Officials** have a significant role in the prevention and management of injuries and Concussion. In addition to Sections 4 and 5 of this Policy, Officials will:
- Be Fit for Duty when undertaking their responsibilities.
  - Ensure a safe playing environment by enforcing and communicating the enforcement of the Laws of the Game appropriate to the age, gender, body type, experience, ability, and fitness level of the involved Players.
  - Maintain World Rugby's Concussion Management for the General Public certification and enforce the 'Recognize and Remove, if in doubt, sit them out' protocol at all Rugby Alberta competitions, tournaments, and events.
  - Provide accurate accounts of the facts when completing match reports.
- 6.5 **Players** have responsibilities on and off the pitch. In addition to Section 4 of this Policy, Players will:
- Compete and participate in a spirit of fair play, honesty and respect for the opponent, the officials, and the supporters.
  - Compete and participate within the Laws of the Game, sanctioned Law Variations, and any rules or competitions or tournament rules.
  - Report any current or past health or medical issues that may risk their physical or mental well-being when participating in athletic activities, including any signs or symptoms of Concussion.
  - At all times show and uphold respect for coaches, team managers, therapists, medical staff, and support personnel, and show appreciation for their contribution to the sport of Rugby.
  - At all times show and uphold respect for officials and show appreciation for their contribution to the sport of Rugby.
- 6.6 **Parents and guardians of Players** have additional responsibilities, particularly as it relates to ensuring the safe and fair play of Rugby. In addition to Section 4 of this Policy, parents and guardians of Players will:



- a) Instill a spirit of fair, positive play and sportsmanship in the rugby-playing children.
- b) At all times show and uphold respect for the child's coach and team manager, therapist or medical staff, the opponents, the officials, and other supporters.
- c) Continually inform the relevant coach, team manager, therapist, medical staff, and/or club volunteer if your child has been injured, is ill, Concussed, or shows any symptoms of Concussion.
- d) Inform the relevant coach, team manager, therapist, medical staff, and/or club volunteer if your child has any medical or health condition, as well as any sensory, intellectual, or physical disability that may impact their health, ability or enjoyment while participating in Rugby.

## 7. BREACHES AND COMPLAINTS

- 7.1 All individuals shall abide by the requirements of Rugby Alberta's Bylaws and this Code of Conduct and shall endeavour to resolve disputes in good faith.
- 7.2 If the complaint in any way refers to the possible Abuse or Neglect of a Minor, you have the legal duty to report the concern to **Alberta's Child Abuse Hotline** by phoning **1-800-387-5437 (KIDS)**. Call 9-1-1 if you or the person you are reporting is in immediate danger.
- 7.3 Any concerns regarding possible Maltreatment should be directed to the **Canadian Sport Helpline**, by phoning **1-888-837-7678** or emailing [info@abuse-free-sport.ca](mailto:info@abuse-free-sport.ca).
- 7.4 Any complaints concerning a violation or breach of this Code of Conduct must be submitted in writing. Written complaints submitted should contain full and exact details of the incident(s), including date, time and/or duration, location, full names of the persons involved, names of any witnesses, and other pertinent details of the alleged breach of this Code of Conduct. The complainant has the following avenues to report their complaint:
  - a) Report to Rugby Alberta: email [info@rugbyalberta.com](mailto:info@rugbyalberta.com) or contact any Director of Rugby Alberta.
  - b) Report to Rugby Canada: email [safesport\\_wwdrs@primus.ca](mailto:safesport_wwdrs@primus.ca)
  - c) Report via the Canadian Sport Helpline: email [info@abuse-free-sport.ca](mailto:info@abuse-free-sport.ca)
- 7.5 If reported to Rugby Canada or via the Canadian Sport Helpline, the complaint may be referred to Rugby Alberta to be dealt under this Code of Conduct.
- 7.6 Upon receipt of the complaint under Section 7.4, the recipient of the complaint shall inform the President of Rugby Alberta or any Officer of Rugby Alberta. If the complaint directly or indirectly refers to criminal behavior, the Officer shall refer the matter to the local police. If not, the Board shall appoint a Case Manager to investigate the complaint in accordance with Rugby Alberta's Bylaws and Rugby Canada's [Discipline and Complaints Policy](#).
- 7.7 The Case Manager will determine when to notify the Respondent of the complaint and any investigation, but it must be done in a timely manner in the circumstances.
- 7.8 Any investigation will be undertaken in a manner that accords with the principles of due process and natural justice.



- 7.9 The Case Manager will provide a confidential, written report of the findings of the investigation to the President of Rugby Alberta, the Executive Council, and to the Complainant and the Respondent. The report should include findings as to whether there has been, on a balance of probabilities, a breach of this Code of Conduct, and recommendations as to the appropriate resolution of the complaint.
- 7.10 In accordance with Rugby Alberta Bylaws, any complaint resolution that involves the suspension or expulsion of a Member must be approved by the Board.
- 7.11 All received complaints will be dealt with by Rugby Alberta, but nothing herein stops a Club Member from undertaking its own investigation of alleged misconduct, and from imposing its own sanctions where appropriate on its own individual members.
- 7.12 Any complaints concerning a violation of World Rugby Regulation 17 (Foul Play) must be submitted in writing to [info@rugbyalberta.com](mailto:info@rugbyalberta.com) and will be dealt with in accordance to Rugby Alberta's Discipline Policy.
- 7.13 Any complaints that are found to be intentionally false, malicious or frivolous will be subject to discipline in accordance with this policy.

## **8. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

- 8.1 Any individual found to have breached this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Rugby Alberta's Bylaws, which may include reprimand, suspension, or expulsion from Rugby Alberta and/or Rugby Alberta's Board, Committees, membership, competitions, events, programs, squads, or teams, as well as prohibiting any future membership or involvement with Rugby Alberta.
- 8.2 Rugby Alberta may determine that a particular alleged breach or breaches of this Code of Conduct are of such seriousness to warrant suspension of the Individual Member, Individual or Club Member pending a hearing and a decision of the Board in accordance with Rugby Alberta's Bylaws.

## **9. APPEALS**

- 9.1 Any Complainant, Respondent or Affected Party who wishes to appeal a decision made under this Code of Conduct may do so in line with Rugby Alberta's Appeals Policy.

## **10. SUPPORTING POLICIES**

### **Internal**

- The Alberta Rugby Football Union Bylaws
- Rugby Alberta Appeals Policy
- Rugby Alberta Discipline Policy

### **External**



- [Rugby Canada Safe Sport Suite](#)
- Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport
- The Criminal Code of Canada (Criminal Code, R.S.C. 1985, c.C-46, as amended)
- International Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport
- Coaches Association of Canada Policy

## **11. REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

This Code of Conduct shall be reviewed on a regular basis. All amendments and revisions require the approval of the Rugby Alberta Board.