

CLINICAL COMMENTARY

RETURN TO PLAY PROGRESSION FOR RUGBY
FOLLOWING INJURY TO THE LOWER EXTREMITY: A
CLINICAL COMMENTARY AND REVIEW OF THE
LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Background & Purpose: Rugby requires unique demands from its players. Those involved in rehabilitation and care of these athletes must possess an understanding of both the game and various positions. There have been numerous reports focusing on the physiological demands and biomechanical analyses of various components of gameplay, but no specific progression has been developed to assist clinicians assessing the readiness to return of a player after injury. The purpose of this clinical commentary is to outline testing components, general gameplay guidelines, movement progressions, and sport and position-specific progressions related to rugby gameplay following a lower extremity injury.

Description of Topic: This commentary provides a recommended progression for clinical use for use in a return to rugby program. It includes metabolic considerations, advanced strengthening exercises, agility exercises, and incorporation of drills specific to the sport of rugby that may be performed with the clinician or with assistance from team members. This progression also includes testing parameters for each phase and guidance for clinicians regarding the ability to gauge readiness to return to sport.

Discussion: It is essential that an athlete returning to the sport of rugby undertake a guided, graduated return to sport progression to ensure safety and to decrease the risk of re-injury. This proposed return to sport progression outlines key parameters for both the sport as a whole and for various specific positions.

Level of Evidence: Level 5 – Clinical Commentary, Review of Literature

Keywords: Positional demands, rehabilitation, return to play, rugby

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Acknowledgement: The authors would like to thank Christopher Juneau and the Queen City Rugby Football Club for their invaluable assistance.