

TRAINING & INJURY PREVENTION: NEWS FROM OTHER SPORTS: RUGBY

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With the advent of professional rugby in the late 1980s and in particular over the last decade rugby players have become bigger, faster and stronger (1, 2).

Rules have been refined to reduce the danger of catastrophic injury in scrums and head and facial trauma in rucks, however the game of rugby remains a high impact collision sport with many injuries sustained in tackle situations and where heads collide at speed. In particular many injuries coincide with poor ability to be technically proficient at speed.

Such a pattern poses a dilemma for the continued evolution of rugby as a sporting code. Do we continue to triage towards bigger and faster players or do we develop higher levels of skill to minimise injury through good technique?

As with all arms wars the balance has to be addressed in order to be competitive across all matches. A small skilful side can be ousted by a much larger stronger side.

Thus the main thrust of modern training is the attempt to obtain balance, to develop players highly technically skilled who can minimise injury through good technique, and athletically developed to have both resilience and characteristics of speed and strength.

References

1. Quarrie KL, Hopkins WG. Changes in player characteristics and match activities in Bledisloe Cup rugby union from 1972 to 2004. *J Sports Sci* 2007; 25(8):895-903
2. Quarrie KL, Hopkins WG. Tackle injuries in professional Rugby Union. *Am J Sports Med* 2008; 36(9): 1705-1716