

A PROSPECTIVE STUDY OF INJURIES SUSTAINED DURING THE 2009 NRL AND NYC SEASON

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Introduction

The National rugby League (NRL) research board is committed to conducting an injury surveillance system at both the NRL and National Youth Competition (NYC) level (Under 20s) to gain a better understanding of the composition of injuries sustained in professional rugby league. The aim was to identify the incidence, site, severity, nature and risk factors of injuries sustained in the 2009 season that resulted in missed playing time.

Methods

Sixteen clubs participating in the NRL & NYC competition were asked to collect data on the injuries sustained by their players during the 2009 NRL and NYC season (26 rounds plus 'finals' games). There were 459 players that participated in first grade and 559 players that participated in the NYC competition during the 2009 season. The injury definition used was: "any injury that was sustained during a first grade NRL game (or NYC game) or training session that resulted in missed game time".

Results & Discussion

Of the 330 (71.9%) NRL players injured, 587 injuries were reported averaging 1.8 injuries per injured player compared to 296 (53%) injured NYC players for 485 injuries. Table 1 depicts main injury data. The tackle contest accounts for approximately 57% of all injuries – predominantly to the knee or ankle when *being tackled* and to the shoulder when *making the tackle*. Injuries resulting in most missed games include ACL, ankle syndesmosis, hamstring and foot/leg fractures.

Table 1: NRL & NYC injury data

	NRL average	NYC average		NRL average	NYC average
Injured players/club	21.5	18.5	Injury type (%)	Ligament (19.1)	Ligament (29.7)
Number of injuries	38.6	30.3		Muscle (19.1)	
Game injury rate/1000 hrs	67.9	50.9	Injury site (%)	Upper leg (19.3)	Foot/ankle (19)
Missed games in season	92.3	91.4	Mechanism (%)	Being tackled (40)	Being tackled (32)
Risk of sustaining injury	6.9	5.2	Occurrence (%)	1 st half (53.6)	2 nd half (57)
# major injuries (>5 games)	77	95	Prevalence	Hamstring (3.4)	Leg/foot fractures (3)

Conclusion

There is a higher incidence of injury among players participating in the NRL. Older players have a greater risk of sustaining an injury in the NRL (compared to younger NRL players) however NYC players are more likely to sustain a 'major' injury.