



# Player Load

MCC Update Meeting

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# Player Load Guidelines

- Player Load – sport’s biggest challenge
- World Rugby’s role?
- Origins; Regulation 9 – “Global Calendar”
  - If a global season is not possible, what is?
  - A set of principles to provide a calendar which prioritises player welfare
- Reflect Local Guidelines, shared responsibility & evolution
- Core elements; off season, matches, post-international, communication, contact training
- A framework within which individualised load management can operate





# Player Load Guidelines

## Proposed Recommendations

1. Five weeks off-season
2. Match Number – 30 matches or 6 consecutive
3. In-season rest – post international
4. Club Country communication
5. Non-contact blocks



# Challenges

## Current player load recommendations:

- Data derived from 1 professional competition
- Training load information has come from survey data
- Limited women's specific data



# What we currently know

## PRL

- Injury risk in the subsequent season was ↑ for players with low (<15) or high (>35) match involvements (Williams et al., 2017)
- Injury rates were shown to ↑ with ↑ in the 1-month match exposure, particularly for those players with limited number of matches (Williams et al., 2017)
- Involvement in ≥31 matches was associated with ↑ match and training injury burden during the following season (Williams et al. 2023)



## Top 14

- Emerging evidence looking at training load structure and content and the subsequent risk of injury Cheradame et al. 2024

# Primary Aim:

Global picture descriptive picture of men's and women's professional rugby



| DATE       | TIME  | LOCATION        | TEAM   | SCORE | STATUS |
|------------|-------|-----------------|--------|-------|--------|
| 10/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 11/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 12/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 13/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 14/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 15/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 16/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 17/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 18/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 19/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 20/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 21/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 22/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 23/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 24/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 25/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 26/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 27/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 28/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 29/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |
| 30/10/2023 | 15:00 | Stade de France | France | 16-10 | W      |

# Secondary Aim

- To provide a player's voice to the mental and physical fatigue/energy levels at certain time points across a calendar year across a range of experience levels





**PREMIERSHIP  
RUGBY**



Allianz 

**PWR**

PREMIERSHIP  
WOMEN'S RUGBY

**TOP  
14**  
RUGBY



**UNITED RUGBY  
CHAMPIONSHIP**



**MAJOR LEAGUE  
RUGBY**



**SUPER RUGBY  
PACIFIC**

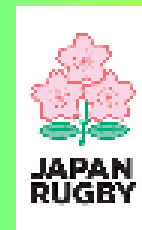


JAPAN RUGBY  
LEAGUE

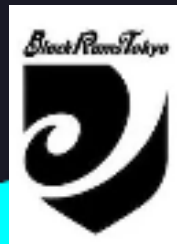
**ONE**



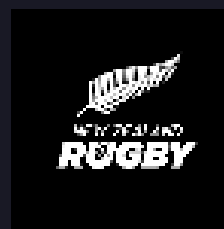
# Men's Calendar



| Competition                | Dec-25     | Jan-26                   | Feb-26                     | Mar-26 | Apr-26     | May-26 | Jun-26     | Jul-26     | Aug-26                   | Sep-26                     | Oct-26 | Nov-26             | Dec-26     | Jan-27 | Feb-27      | Mar-27 | Apr-27      | May-27 | Jun-27 |  |  |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------|--------------------|------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|--------|--|--|
| Super Rugby NZ             | Pre-Season |                          | Super Rugby Regular Season |        |            |        |            |            | Bunnings NPC Competition |                            |        |                    | Off-Season |        |             |        |             |        |        |  |  |
| Super Rugby Australia      | Pre-Season |                          | Super Rugby Regular Season |        |            |        |            | Off-season |                          |                            |        |                    |            |        |             |        |             |        |        |  |  |
| MJR                        | Off-Season | Pre-Season               | MJR Regular Season         |        |            |        |            | Off-season |                          |                            |        |                    |            |        |             |        |             |        |        |  |  |
| LRC                        |            |                          |                            |        | Off-season |        |            |            | Pre-Season               |                            |        | LRC Regular Season |            |        |             |        |             |        |        |  |  |
| The Top 14                 |            |                          |                            |        |            |        |            | Off-Season | Pre-Season               | Top 14 Regular Season      |        |                    |            |        |             |        |             |        |        |  |  |
| PRL                        |            |                          |                            |        |            |        |            | Off-Season | Pre-Season               | PRL Regular Season         |        |                    |            |        |             |        |             |        |        |  |  |
| Japan Rugby League Div 1   | Pre-Season | Japan Rugby League Div 1 |                            |        |            |        | Off-season |            |                          |                            |        |                    |            |        |             |        |             |        |        |  |  |
| International Competitions |            |                          |                            |        |            |        |            |            |                          |                            |        |                    |            |        |             |        |             |        |        |  |  |
| Northern Hemisphere        |            |                          | Six Nations Championship   |        |            |        |            |            |                          | Test Series                |        |                    |            |        |             |        | Test Series |        |        |  |  |
| Southern Hemisphere        |            |                          |                            |        |            |        |            |            | Test Series              | Lions tour to South Africa |        |                    |            |        | Test Series |        |             |        |        |  |  |
| Pacific Nations            |            |                          |                            |        |            |        |            |            | Pacific Nations Cup      |                            |        |                    |            |        |             |        |             |        |        |  |  |



# Women's Calendar



| Competition                | Dec-25 | Jan-26     | Feb-26         | Mar-26    | Apr-26      | May-26 | Jun-26 | Jul-26 | Aug-26     | Sep-26     | Oct-26         | Nov-26 | Dec-26 | Jan-27 | Feb-27 | Mar-27 | Apr-27 | May-27 | Jun-27 |
|----------------------------|--------|------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|------------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| PWR                        |        |            |                |           |             |        |        |        | Pre-Season |            | Regular Season |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Super Rugby W              |        | Pre-Season | Regular Season |           |             |        |        |        |            |            |                |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Super Rugby Aupiki         |        | Pre-Season | Regular Season |           |             |        |        |        |            |            |                |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| International Competitions |        |            |                |           |             |        |        |        |            |            |                |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| 6 Nations                  |        |            |                | 6 Nations |             |        |        |        |            |            |                |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| PAC 4                      |        |            |                |           | PAC4 Series |        |        |        |            |            |                |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| WXV                        |        |            |                |           |             |        |        |        |            | WXV Series |                |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |





# Match Variables

| Variable Collected | Who will Provide Data       | What Metrics will be Examine | Specific Details Around Data    |                                                |  |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--|
| Matches            | World Rugby Player Database | Minutes played               |                                 |                                                |  |
|                    |                             | Player number                |                                 |                                                |  |
|                    |                             | Starting 23                  |                                 |                                                |  |
|                    |                             | Score of <u>match</u>        | Win vs loss                     |                                                |  |
|                    |                             |                              | Point difference                |                                                |  |
|                    |                             | Location of match            | Travel data                     | KM travelled from home city to away game       |  |
|                    |                             |                              |                                 | Time zones crossed                             |  |
|                    | Type of travel              |                              |                                 | Economy, business                              |  |
|                    | Team                        | Away games                   | Traveling squad                 | Attendance regarding players who are traveling |  |
|                    | Team/Union                  | Match time loss injuries     | Alignment with injury consensus |                                                |  |

# Training Variables

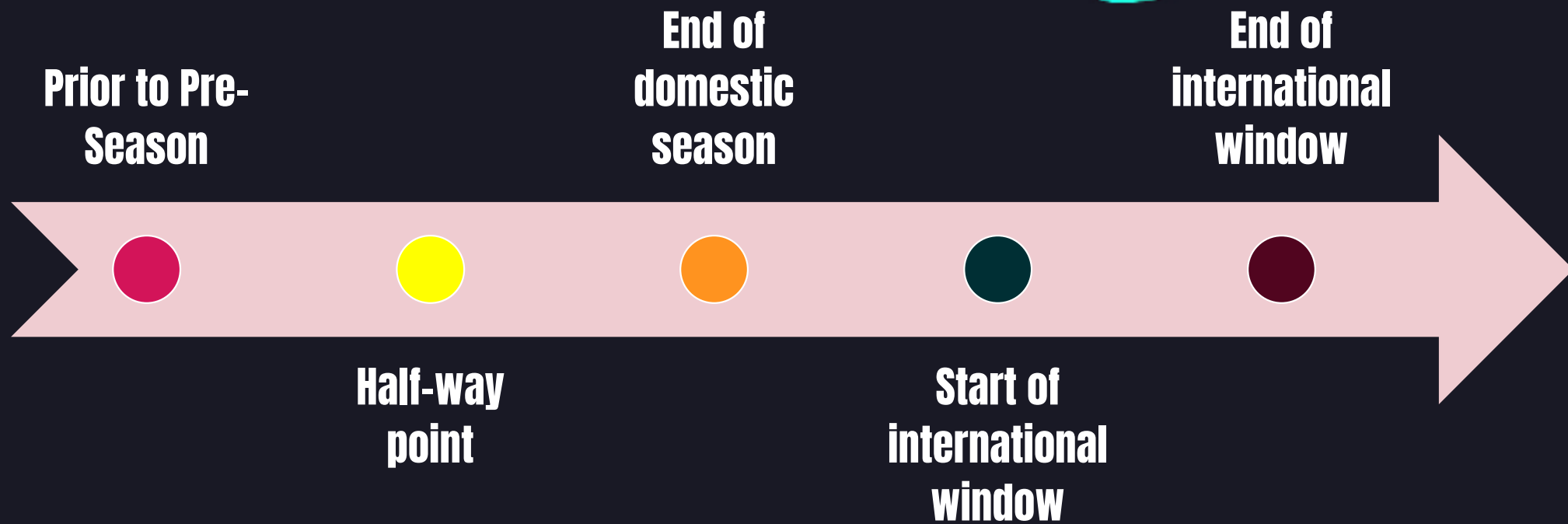
| Variable Collected | Who will Provide Data | What Metrics will be Examine | Specific Details Around Data    |                                   |                     |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Training Data      | Team                  | Weekly schedule              | Assembly                        | Days assembled and days off       |                     |
|                    |                       |                              | Make-up of actual day           | Hrs. assembled                    |                     |
|                    | Team                  | Daily training blocks        | Session type                    | Rugby training with breakdown for | Full contact        |
|                    |                       |                              |                                 |                                   | Controlled contact  |
|                    |                       |                              |                                 |                                   | Live set piece play |
|                    |                       |                              | Gym sessions                    |                                   |                     |
|                    |                       |                              |                                 | Conditioning                      |                     |
|                    |                       |                              | Duration of each session        | minutes                           |                     |
|                    |                       |                              | Intensity                       | RPE (provided by S&C)             | 1-10                |
|                    |                       |                              | Player attendance               |                                   |                     |
|                    | Team/Union            | Training time loss injuries  | Alignment with injury consensus |                                   |                     |



# Players Voice

- Team = ID 6 players
- 3-5 interviews over the season
  - Aim to explore how they are feeling from a physical and mental fatigue/energy perspective

# Player Interviews over the Season



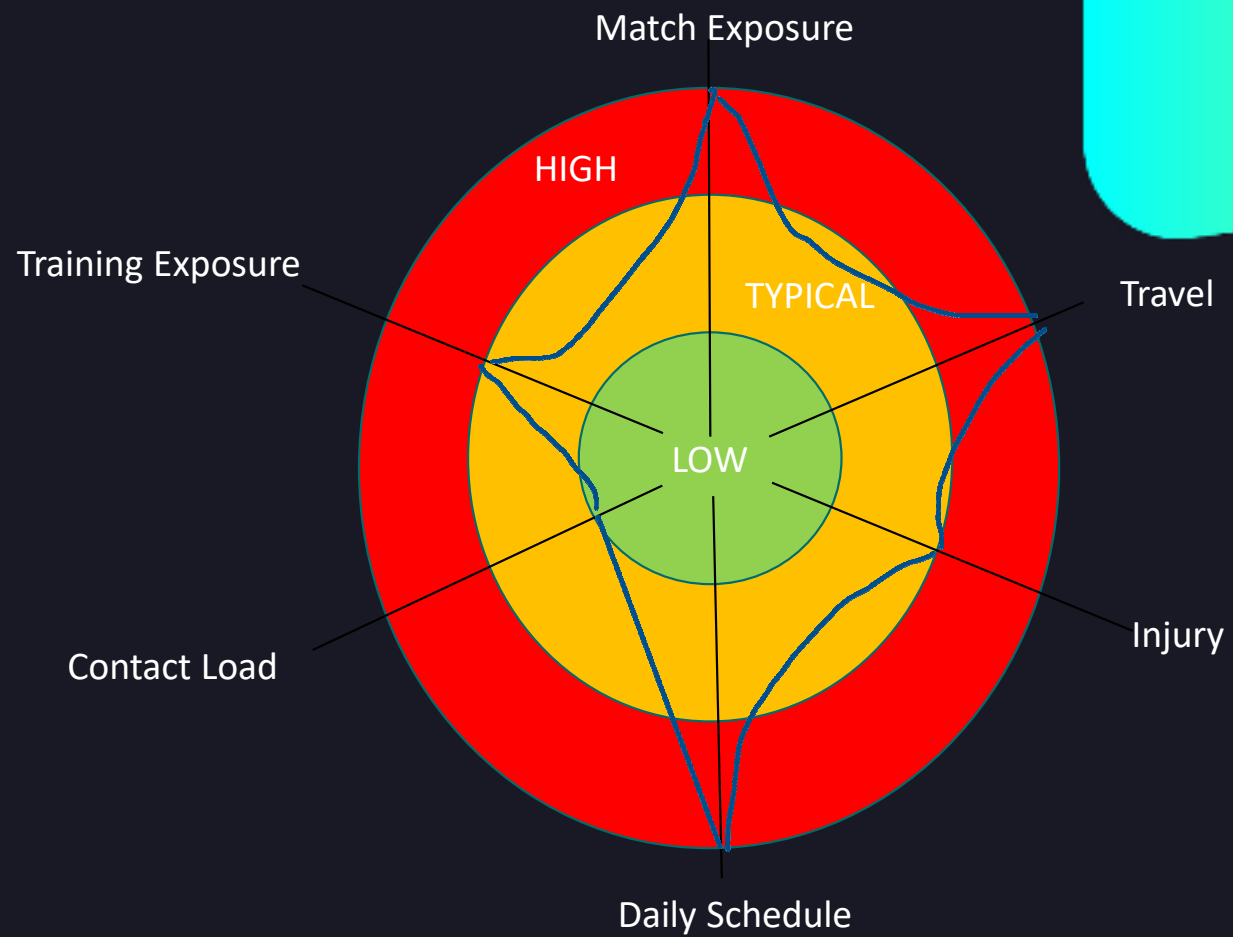
| Player | Type                                         | Description                                                                                                                                  |
|--------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | Fringe player                                | A player who trains with the team but gets minimal playing time                                                                              |
| 2      | New fully contracted player                  | Younger player who recently joined the team but who gets regular playing time                                                                |
| 3      | Domestic and U20 national team               | A member of the squad who gets regular playing time but is also on the U20 international squad                                               |
| 4      | Domestic only player                         | A player who gets regular playing and has been involved with the club for <u>a number of years</u> but is not playing international rugby    |
| 5      | Domestic and International same country      | A younger player who is playing both club and has recently been named to the international squad (0-2 years international experience)        |
| 6      | Domestic and International same country      | Senior player who is playing both club and international rugby same country (> 2 years international experience)                             |
| 7      | Domestic and International different country | Senior player who is playing both club and international rugby same country (> 2 years international experience) but for a different country |

# OUTCOMES

- Avg match load per comp -median number & player minutes, exposure by domestic vs international, consecutive matches played
- Avg daily schedule
- Off-season -Number of consecutive weeks
- Full season -Number of weeks of training involving contact/non-contact training
- Breakdown by phase of season -days assembled, days off, hours assembled per day
- Training load per competition -phase of season, sessions per week, intensity and duration of session
- Travel load per competition -length, duration and type







# Thank You:

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Prof Jon Patricios  
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Dr. Sean Williams

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Dr. Jason Suter

## MLR Teams

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## New Zealand Rugby Union

Karen Rasmussen

## Wales Rugby Union

Prabhat Mathema

## Scottish Rugby Union

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