

COMMENTARY

This paper discusses an issue of topical importance. Concussion papers have featured on many occasions in this journal. The International Rugby Board guidelines are out of step with the Vienna and Prague guidelines.

We have moved away from mandatory stand down periods, which reflects the fact that not all head injuries are the same. Therefore a one-size-fits-all policy is not appropriate. Teenagers with incomplete brain maturity and a greater tendency for risk taking behaviour need if anything more conservative return to play guidelines than adults. This

article reveals some disturbing findings—in particular, the feeling of 27% of players that a player with suspected concussion should play in an important game such as a final. The Prague guidelines introduced the concept of “cognitive rest”—that is, limiting of scholastic activities while symptomatic. I would endorse this, and have found it helpful when discussing life activities with students with concussion. As clinicians and educators, we need to emphasise a stepwise symptom limited return to play strategy.

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Håkan Alfredson is a sport fanatic who is married with two children. He has been chief doctor to a top-level Swedish ice hockey team for 8 years, and chief doctor to a Swedish national junior team for 4 years. He is a professor of sports medicine and an

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Figure 1 Håkan Alfredson.