



# **2026 KOORI KNOCKOUT RULES AND REGULATIONS**

## THE EVENT

1. The Knockout will take place from Friday 2nd October 2026 to Monday 5th October 2026 at the King Park Sports Complex, Raymond Terrace NSW 2324.
2. The host club for The Knockout is Newcastle Yowies (Host Club), the winning team of the 2025 NSW Annual Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout.
3. The Knockout shall be open to all Aboriginal rugby league and sporting teams throughout New South Wales (NSW) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).
4. All players participating in The Knockout must be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.
5. Any club, its officials or players that is found guilty of breaching these Rules and Regulations may be refused entry into The Knockout and from future involvement in this event.
6. Each club that intends to participate will be required to give consent to abide by the Rules and Regulations as stipulated by the Host Club. Non-compliance will result in the possibility of the club and or team being disqualified from the event.
7. The RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE 2026 NSW ANNUAL ABORIGINAL RUGBY LEAGUE KNOCKOUT and the NATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT should be adhered to at all times.

## TEAM NOMINATIONS

8. All team nominations from respective clubs in NSW and the ACT must be registered with the Host Club by 5:00 pm Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2026, accompanied by a NON-REFUNDABLE nomination fee of \$1,500.00 for the Men's competition and \$1,500.00 for the Women's competition. Nominations will not be accepted until both these requirements have been met. The youth competitions are free.
9. The age of players participating in the Women's and Men's competitions must be 17 years of age at the commencement of the Knockout.
10. Once a club has registered its team(s) with the Host Club, that club's team(s) will remain locked in as a registered team nomination. There will be no refund of the nomination fee, regardless of whether the club decides to withdraw the team(s) from the event or is unable to make the event for whatever reason.
11. A completed 2026 Nomination Form must be submitted to the Host Club and the registration fee paid in full before a team's nomination is accepted. Final team nomination sheets must be signed by all players and submitted to the Host Club one hour prior to the commencement of their first game.
12. Any team that does not notify the Host Club of their intention to withdraw from the Knockout prior to the official draw and forfeits their first game, will receive an automatic two year suspension from future Knockouts.

13. Clubs nominating teams in the youth competitions are responsible for ensuring that their players are the correct age:

- i. Players born in 2013 or later are eligible to participate in the Under 13s competition
- ii. Players born in 2011 or later are eligible to participate in the Under 15s competitions
- iii. Players born in 2009 or later are eligible to participate in the Under 17s competitions

## GAME RULES

14. The Knockout competitions will be officiated using RUGBY LEAGUE LAWS OF THE GAME 2023 EDITION, NATIONAL PLAY SAFE CODE and the NATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT.

15. The following exceptions to the **RUGBY LEAGUE LAWS OF THE GAME 2023 EDITION** will be used specifically for The Knockout:

Section 4.2: Each team may make unlimited substitutions during the course of a match provided that the names of the substitute players are registered one hour prior to the team's first competition game.

Section 6.2 (a): the team scoring the greater number of points shall win the game. In preliminary rounds if both teams score an equal number of points, the match will go into extra time of five (5) minutes only (golden point). If no points are scored during extra time, the first try scorer is declared the winner. In the event that there are no try scorers, the first team to have kicked a penalty goal will be declared the winner. If no winner is decided from this, the result will be decided on whoever kicked the first field goal. If both teams fail to score, the team awarded the first penalty will be declared the winner. If there were no penalties throughout the game, the team to win the first scrum is declared the winner.

Section 6.2 (b): Should a Semi Final end in a draw, the match will go into extra time of five (5) minutes each way until a winner is declared through the first point(s) scored (golden point). In the event of the match remaining deadlocked, five (5) minutes each way will continue until a winner is declared through the first point(s) scored. There will be no time off at the completion of each five (5) minute period (straight swap of ends).

Should the Final end in a draw; the match will go into extra time of five (5) minutes each way until a winner is decided through the first point(s) scored (golden point). In the event of the match remaining deadlocked, five (5) minutes each way will continue until a winner is decided through the first point(s) scored. There will be no time off at the completion of each five (5) minute period (straight swap of ends).

Section 7.1: The preliminary rounds of the men's competition will consist of two (2) x twenty (20) minute halves with no break at half time (straight swap of ends). There will be no time off for injury in the first half, unless deemed necessary by the referee in conjunction with the Table Official for the safe removal of an injured player. Time off will be allowed in the second half.

The Semi Finals of the men's competition will consist of two (2) x thirty (30) minute halves; with a five (5) minute break at half time. There will be no time off for injury during the first half, unless deemed necessary by the referee in conjunction with the Table Official for the safe removal of an injured player. Time off will be allowed in the second half.

The Final of the men's competition will consist of two (2) x forty (40) minute halves; with a ten (10) minute break at half time. There will be no time off for injury during the first half, unless deemed necessary by the referee in conjunction with the Table Official for the safe removal of an injured player. Time off will be allowed in the second half.

Section 16.6: In the event of misconduct by a player during the tournament, the Referee shall, at their discretion apply the following:

**Preliminary Rounds** - Caution, temporarily suspend for five (5) minutes, or dismiss the offender.

**Semi Finals** - Caution, temporarily suspend for five (5) minutes or dismiss the offender.

**Final** - Caution, temporarily suspend for ten (10) minutes or dismiss the offender.

## CLUB TEAMS

16. Each team will consist of a maximum number of twenty-five (25) players and two (2) team officials.
17. Clubs that cannot nominate the full complement of twenty-five (25) players in their team when nominating will be allowed to nominate additional players up until one (1) hour prior to the commencement of their first competition game of The Knockout, provided those players nominated are not registered with another team. Where a club has more than one (1) team entered in The Knockout, respective clubs should also refer to RULE 19.
18. All participating clubs must complete their official team sheets with the names of the players and their signatures prior to taking the field for each competition game of The Knockout. Names and number of players registered at the time of them taking the field for their first competition game in The Knockout will be the entire complement that can be used for the remainder of The Knockout. Players must maintain the same number throughout The Knockout. Players cannot be added to team lists any time after their first game nomination.
19. Provided a player has signed Form B of the registered 2026 Nomination Form prior to the commencement of their first competition game of The Knockout, they are only required to sign official team sheets in the games that they are to participate in. All official team sheets must be submitted 30 minutes prior to each game.
20. Clubs that nominate more than one team in The Knockout must nominate at least fifteen (15) Names of players in the Number One Team, no less than one hour prior to the official draw.
21. Any player who signs the official team registration form of a club must play with that particular team. This player cannot play for another team, including from the same club and can be considered to be in breach of the rules if he or she is found to have done so. This may cause the teams to be disqualified from The Knockout.

## TEAM MAKE UP AND REPLACEMENTS

22. All twenty-five (25) players can be used in all matches, including preliminary games, Semi Finals and the Final. All twelve (12) substitutes can be used as unlimited interchange players during each game throughout The Knockout.

## SUSPENDED PLAYERS

23. All suspended players are not allowed to play in the Knockout, unless the individual player has an exemption letter from their local league/judiciary allowing them to play. This includes the men's, women and youth teams.

24. If proven a player has played under suspension without an exemption letter from their local league/judiciary, the player and team will be disqualified from The Knockout immediately.

25. Any player (or club) that was suspended at the 2025 Knockout will be required to serve their suspension before being able to participate in any games.

## THE GAME

26. Official badged referees will control all games during The Knockout.

27. 2026 Team Nomination Form must be completed and lodged by the Club Official(s) one (1) hour prior to their first game of the competition. The Confirmation of Aboriginality Form and Declaration of Consent Form must be attached where applicable.

28. The official team sheets must be completed by all teams and lodged at the Official Table on each field thirty (30) minutes prior to the starting time of their respective matches throughout The Knockout.

29. All clubs are to ensure that one (1) registered Team Official be present at the Official Table whilst their team is playing a match and the other registered Team Official is present on the substitute bench to assist with the policing of the interchange of substitutes.

30. All clubs are to ensure that only Team Officials and the listed substitute players be the persons permitted to approach the Interchange Official when making a substitution.

31. All clubs are to provide an additional official to assist in managing team and supporter behaviour during the course of a match. The official's role is to ensure that their supporters remain outside the Official Playing Area of the ground at all times (this includes the area set aside for the substitute bench). Unruly behaviour will not be tolerated, and teams may be disqualified from The Knockout, this includes teams and/or supporters that disrupt the continuation of games by taking the field. Any violent behaviour will be reported to the Police.

32. All clubs are to ensure that their Team Coach, Team Manager, Team Official, two trainers and substitute players be the only ones permitted inside the Official Playing Area whilst their team is playing.

33. All players and officials will remain at the ground if their respective teams are still required to play further matches on that day.

## **MATCH DURATION– YOUTH AND WOMEN COMPETITIONS**

34. Matches in the youth and women's competitions will commence on Friday 2nd October 2026 and will continue across the period of the Knockout, culminating in the Finals of all competitions on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2026.
35. All games in the youth competitions will consist of two (2) x fifteen (15) minute halves with no break at half time (straight swap of ends). There will be no time out for injury during the first half, unless deemed necessary by the referee in conjunction with the Table Official for the safe removal of an injured player. Time off for injury will be allowed in the second half.
36. The preliminary rounds in the women's competition will consist of two (2) x fifteen (15) minute halves with no break at half time (straight swap of ends). There will be no time out for injury during the first half, unless deemed necessary by the referee in conjunction with the Table Official for the safe removal of an injured player. Time off for injury will be allowed in the second half.
37. The Semi Finals and Final of the women's competition will consist of two (2) x twenty (20) minute halves; with a five (5) minute break at half time. There will be no time out for injury in the first half, unless deemed necessary by the referee in conjunction with the Table official for the safe removal of an injured player. Time off for injury will be allowed in the second half.

## **INTERCHANGE**

38. All interchange player(s) must remain with the interchange official on the sideline until cleared to enter the playing field. This will only happen when the interchange official is satisfied that the interchanged player has left the playing field.
39. Clubs are permitted to substitute no more than four (4) interchange players at any one time, during the match.

## **CLUB TRAINERS**

40. All trainers must have relevant qualifications before taking the field.
41. The following rules apply to Trainers:
- i.** Maximum of two trainers on the field at any time unless injuries warrant further numbers;
  - ii.** Trainers are only to enter the field of play for an injury, when there is a try or stoppage or if the referee has signalled time off;
  - iii.** Trainers who enter the field of play while their team is in possession of the ball are to address the players as required and immediately return to the bench;
  - iv.** Trainers are not to enter the field of play during a scrum or if an altercation commences (if a trainer is on the field when an altercation commences he/she is in no way to move closer to the incident); any trainer doing so will be relieved of their duty;
  - v.** Trainers are not to approach or speak to the match officials at any time;
  - vi.** Trainers are to give support and encouragement and are not to engage in bad sportsmanship, sledging, crude or unseemly actions to opposing players, referees and other officials.

## PLAYING UNIFORMS

42. All clubs participating in the Knockout are to ensure that all players wear full playing uniforms during all matches that they are required to participate in for the duration of The Knockout. Full playing uniforms include proper playing jerseys, shorts, socks and appropriate footwear. Team jerseys are to have clear numbers on the back of the jerseys.

## JUDICIARY AND DISPUTE COMMITTEES

43. The Judiciary Committee will officially adjudicate over all game related matters arising from The Knockout. The Judiciary Committee will be appointed by the Host Club. Where there is a conflict of interest, affected committee members will declare this conflict and be replaced for that particular hearing by a member nominated by the Host Club in conjunction with the Judiciary Chairperson.
44. Where a Judiciary Committee member has been replaced for a hearing, they may accompany the club officials (and where necessary, the player) during any hearing procedures.
45. The Judiciary Committee will be chaired by an Aboriginal person appointed by the Host Club, independent of the Host Club and all participating clubs. The Host Club in conjunction with the Judiciary Committee Chairperson will nominate the remainder of the committee for each hearing. The Judiciary Committee will act on behalf of the Host Club and rulings will be deemed final.
46. All protests must be lodged with the Official Table, in writing by the nominated Team Officials, no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the completion of the match under question, with adequate evidence of claims.
47. All protests will be adjudicated by a Disputes Committee nominated by the Host Club.
48. The written protest must contain statement of fact, evidence if applicable and must provide clear and precise details relating directly to the reason for the protest. The mandatory protest fee of \$2,000.00 cash must also accompany the document. An official receipt for the sum of \$2,000.00 will be provided.
49. In the event of a successful protest, the protest fee will be returned to the club. However, if unsuccessful, the fee will be forfeited to the Host Club.
50. If the Disputes Committee receives a protest relating to the playing of a non-Aboriginal person or persons that cannot be resolved at The Knockout, the 2025 Host Club will table this at the first Team Delegates meeting in 2026 for review. If the appeal is upheld, that particular club which includes all its officials and players registered on the official team Nomination Form will be suspended for 5 years.
51. Any club, player or official who brings the Knockout into disrepute or disrupts the running of the Knockout in any way, will be unable to participate any further in the Knockout and will be referred to the judiciary where if found guilty will be suspended for up to 5 years. This also includes supporters of clubs.

52. Any player(s) and/or official(s) sent from the field of play for the duration of a match will automatically appear before the Judiciary within fifteen (15) minutes after the match in which the dismissal occurred, regardless of whether the team has won or lost. It is the Club's responsibility to have the player at the Judiciary within this time period. This rule also applies to trainers and support staff. Failure to appear will result in automatic suspension from the Knockout and suspension from all future NSW Annual Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout carnivals until the player(s) and/or official (s) appear before the Judiciary Committee and has the matter dealt with.
53. The Host Club will have the additional power to cite any player(s) and/or club official(s) for further disciplinary action, particularly for any blatant act of conduct that is deemed to be contrary to the spirit and principles of The Knockout. Should this instance occur, the offending player(s) and/or official (s) will receive a "Notice of Intent "from the Host Club immediately following the conclusion of the match. The player(s) and/or official(s) will then be notified of the specified time that the Judiciary Committee hearing will take place to deal with the matter. This rule also applies to trainers and support staff. Failure to appear will result in:
- *Automatic suspension from The Knockout; and*
  - *Suspension from all future NSW Annual Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout carnivals until the player(s) and/or official(s) appear before the Judiciary Committee and has the matter dealt with.*
54. Where video evidence is available, the Judiciary Committee may decide to use this in their deliberations. This will be at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Judiciary.
55. Any suspension handed down by the judiciary not completed at the 2025 Knockout will carry forward into the 2026 Knockout. The 2026 Host Club and the NSWRL will be informed of any outstanding player or club suspensions from the 2025 Knockout for them to be served at the 2026 Knockout.

## **INSURANCE**

56. The Host Club will ensure that public liability insurance coverage is available for all areas of the King Park Sports Complex, Raymond Terrace NSW 2324.
57. Any player that is under contract by an NRL Club for the year 2026 must have written approval from that respective Club to participate in the Knockout to receive full insurance.

## **CONFIRMATION OF ABORIGINALITY**

58. For the purpose of The Knockout, an Aboriginal person is one who:
- i. Is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent;
  - ii. Identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and
  - iii. Is accepted as such by the community in which they live, or formally lived.

59. All participating teams are required to attach a completed Confirmation of Aboriginality for each individual team member to the official Team Registration Form for players participating in their first Knockout before that player can be registered to play. Please take note that the form must be filled in correctly, signed, and have the stamp of the Common Seal of the organisation that is providing the confirmation. Only new players each year will have to supply this documentation. It is still the responsibility of each Club/Team to ensure all players are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
60. Any organisation found to have knowingly provided a Confirmation of Aboriginality to a non-Aboriginal person for the purpose of participating in the Knockout will be reported to the appropriate authority.

## **PRIZE MONEY**

61. All team nomination fees for the men's and women's competitions will automatically become the total prize money for the official winner, runner up, 3rd & 4th placed teams.
62. The winner of the men's competition has the exclusive right to host the following year's carnival.
63. There will be no prize money for the youth competitions.

## **MAJOR KNOCKOUT TROPHIES**

64. Major Knockout trophies will be given to the winning club from the Host Club.

## **THE USE OF FILM AND APPROVED BODIES**

65. All players and officials who register for The Knockout are giving consent to be filmed and photographed by approved bodies of the Host Club.
66. It shall not be deemed acceptable behaviour for people representing teams to approach the filming crew during duties.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

67. The Host Club will maintain a zero tolerance to violence at The Knockout. Any spectator, official or player being abusive, acting aggressively, threatening and/or violent to any other person at the Knockout may be suspended, disqualified, asked to leave or be removed from the Knockout event. Refer to rule 49.
68. Racism will not be tolerated. Any player being racist will be sin binned, suspended, disqualified and/or the team or individual may be asked to leave or be removed from the event.
69. Teams may be disqualified if the behaviour of their spectators is deemed to be inappropriate, abusive, violent and/or not upholding the spirit of the Knockout carnival.

## ATTACHMENT A - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR CONDUCT:

All spectators, players and team officials must:

- (a) **Respect** the decisions of Match Officials;
- (b) **Never** ridicule or unduly scold a Match official, Player, Coach or other Spectators;
- (c) **Respect** the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, race, colour, religion, language, politics, national or ethnic origin;
- (d) **Not** use violence in any form, whether it is against other spectators, Team Officials (including coaches), Match Officials or Players;
- (e) **Not** engage in discrimination, harassment or abuse in any form, including the use of obscene or offensive language or gestures, the incitement of hatred or violence or partaking in indecent or racist chanting;
- (f) **Comply** with any terms of entry of a venue, including bag inspections, prohibited and restricted items such as Drugs, Alcohol, flares, missiles, dangerous articles and items that have the potential to cause injury or public nuisance;
- (g) **Not** throw missiles (including on to the field of play or at other spectators) and must not enter the field of play or its surrounds without lawful authority;
- (h) **Conduct** themselves in a manner that enhances, rather than injures, the reputation and goodwill of the Knockout and football generally.

Any person who does not comply with this Code of Behaviour and Conduct or who otherwise causes a disturbance and brings the Knockout into disrepute may be evicted from the venue and banned from attending future Knockouts.

**The NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout is an Alcohol, Drug, and Smoke Free Event**

## ATTACHMENT B – JUDICIARY CODE OF PROCEDURE & OFFENCES

DESCRIPTION OF MISCONDUCT	SHORT DESCRIPTION
A Player is guilty of misconduct if he trips another Player	Tripping
A Player is guilty of misconduct if he kicks another Player	Kicking
A Player is guilty of misconduct if he strikes another Player	Striking
A Player is guilty of misconduct if, when he is affecting or attempting to affect a tackle, he makes contact with the head or neck of an opponent intentionally	Intentional High Tackle
A Player is guilty of misconduct if, when he is affecting or attempting to affect a tackle, he makes contact with the head or neck of an opponent Recklessly	Reckless High Tackle
A Player is guilty of misconduct if, when he is affecting or attempting to affect a tackle, he makes contact with the head or neck of an opponent Carelessly	Careless High Tackle
A Player is guilty of misconduct if he drops his knees first onto an opponent who is on the ground	Dropping Knees
A Player is guilty of misconduct if he uses any dangerous throw when effecting a tackle	Dangerous Throw
A Player is guilty of misconduct if he behaves in a way that is contrary to the true spirit of the Game	Contrary Conduct
A Player is guilty of misconduct if he behaves in a manner which is detrimental to the interest, welfare or image of the Knockout and/or the Game	Detrimental Conduct
A Player is guilty of misconduct if he carelessly, recklessly or intentionally makes dangerous contact with the head or neck of an opposing player	Dangerous Contact-Head/Neck

<p>A Player is guilty of misconduct if he carelessly, recklessly or intentionally makes dangerous contact with an opposing player (but which does not involve contact with the opposing players head or neck)</p>	<p>Dangerous Contact- Other</p>
<p>A Player is guilty of misconduct if he carelessly, recklessly or intentionally makes or attempts to make a shoulder charge on an opponent player (that is, by making forceful contact with an opposing player by using his shoulder and/or upper arm without, at the same time, using both arms to tackle or otherwise take hold of that opposing player)</p>	<p>Shoulder Charge</p>

## **ATTACHMENT C: HEAD INJURY ASSESSMENT (HIA)**

- 1.1 Complications can occur if a player continues playing before they have fully recovered from a concussion. Therefore, a player who is suspected of having a concussion must be taken out of the game or training session immediately.
- 1.2 A player who has suffered a concussion or potential concussion or exhibits the symptoms of concussion should not return to play in the same game (or on the same day), even if they appear to have recovered.
- 1.3 Concussion is an evolving condition which may develop over minutes to hours (and sometimes days). Some symptoms or signs may resolve only to be replaced by others later. The management of head injuries may be difficult for non-medical personnel.
- 1.4 It is often unclear whether you are dealing with concussion, or there is a more severe structural head injury, especially in the early phases of an injury.
- 1.5 Concussion is considered a medical condition and therefore needs to be assessed and managed by an appropriately qualified doctor.

## **2. HEAD INJURY ASSESSMENT (HIA) - INTERCHANGE PROCESS**

- 2.1 If a Player is required to leave the field of play as a consequence of the identification of one or more of these features to complete a Head Injury Assessment (HIA), this interchange will not be included for the purposes of calculating the number of interchanges.
- 2.2 The period of time in which the HIA is to take place is a period of 15 Minutes. The time period is to begin from the time at which the Player is in the care of the NRL Medical Officer. If the Player has been cleared by the NRL Medical Officer during the HIA, the Player must report immediately to the Interchange Official prior to or at the completion of the 15 minute HIA period to return to the field of play but can only return at the completion of the 15 minute period.
- 2.3 The 15 minute HIA period will not be assessed against the official Match time or clock. The timing of the HIA period will be monitored by the NRL Medical Officer.
- 2.4 Any Player who is required to leave the field of play for a second HIA in the same Match will not be allowed to return to play in that Match.
- 2.5 In the event that a HIA takes place in the 15-minute period prior to half time, the HIA period will be deemed to have been completed at the end of the half time period, unless 15 minutes has not elapsed.
- 2.6 At the completion of the Match, the NRL Medical Officer is to complete as part of his/her report, details of any Player who has completed a HIA during a Match.

## **3. MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION**

- 3.1 The on-field and sideline assessment of concussion and the return-to-play decisions are of critical importance in the welfare of players under the care and control of the NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout.

## 3.2 BACKGROUND

### 3.2.1 What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a disturbance in brain function caused by a direct or indirect force to the head. An incorrect common assumption is that an athlete must be knocked out to sustain a concussion. Concussion may be caused by either a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an impulsive force that is transmitted to the head. Any change in mental status or function associated with a head injury qualifies as a concussion. Unconsciousness is clearly an indicator of a concussion. Loss of memory following head trauma is also a sign of a potentially more significant concussion.

### 3.2.2 Recognition of a Concussion

Symptoms of concussion may include confusion, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, headache, blurred or double vision, vacant stare, ringing in the ears, poor coordination, loss of balance, sensitivity to light and/or noise, flashing lights, emotional instability (anger, crying and anxiety), feeling sluggish, slurred speech and loss of memory.

### 3.2.3 Concussion and Return-To-Play Decisions

Any player with a suspected concussion **MUST** immediately be removed from the field of play and must be assessed by the Carnival Doctor and **MUST** not be permitted to return to play the same day as directed by the Tournament Doctor. Initial Medical evaluation should be promptly sought (before any training is attempted) and the player should not be left alone but observed for possible delayed problems for example vomiting, dizziness, worsening headaches, double vision or excessive drowsiness.

Any player suffering a **CONCUSSION** as determined by the Carnival Doctor will not be able to participate in the Championship for the remainder of the Knockout and must have a medical clearance before returning to training and playing. Generally, an athlete whose symptoms clear within the first 24 to 48 hours after injury will take approximately 1 to 4 weeks to complete the full rehabilitation protocol.

The Carnival Doctor's decision to not allow a player to return to the field of play or be excluded from the competition based on a diagnosis of concussion/suspected concussion must not be questioned.

### 3.2.4 Guidelines on-field assessment – Sports Trainers

Identifying a concussion as early as possible is paramount and Trainers should be competent in this very important aspect of their duties. Remember that cervical spine injuries may also be present, so be extra vigilant if the player is unconscious or as an altered level of consciousness.

The assessment by the Trainer should include the use of Maddocks Score modified questions.

Maddocks Score:

“I am going to ask you a few questions, please listen carefully and give me your best answer

- What ground are we at today?
- Which half is it now?
- Who scored last in this game?
- What team did you play last game?
- Did your team win the last game?

Incorrect response indicates that the player should be removed from the field for assessment by the NRL Medical Officer or Carnival Doctor – with any failed Maddocks questions being reported to the Carnival Doctor.

Also, uncooperative players may be exhibiting signs of concussion. Therefore, in the event that a player fails to cooperate with the on-field assessment process, they should be removed for further medical assessment.

In addition, the player should be immediately removed from the field of play if any of the following signs are present after a direct or indirect blow to the head:

- loss of consciousness (LOC) player lying motionless on the ground or slow to get up;
- player exhibits balance or motor coordination problems (player stumbles, has slow/laboured movements or unsteady gate);
- player is disoriented or confused (inability to respond appropriately to questions; not aware of plays or scores);
- player exhibits a loss of memory;
- player has dazed, blank or vacant look on face;
- player displays impact seizure (stiff or jerking arms and/or legs);
- player reports significant, new or progressive concussion symptoms;
- behaviour changes not consistent with that player;
- player has visible facial injury in combination with any of the other signs.

## **WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!**

### 3.2.5 Sideline (Dressing Room) Assessment

Sideline (dressing room) assessment should be undertaken by the Carnival Doctor and the result communicated to team management. This should be followed by an off-site assessment by a doctor before any return to training or play is attempted.

### 3.2.6 Post-concussion monitoring

Recovery time is variable across individuals and the player will require careful ongoing monitoring by a responsible adult. Any change in behaviour, vomiting, dizziness, worsening headaches, irritableness, double vision, weak or numb arms or legs, unsteady on their feet, slurred speech or excessive drowsiness, the doctor or the nearest hospital emergency department should be contacted immediately.

### 3.2.7 Recovery

- Physical and mental rest – while strict bed rest is not recommended, restrictions on physical activity and mental activity (e.g. use of computer, phone etc.) in the first 24 to 48 hours are recommended;
- No alcohol;
- No prescription or non-prescription drugs without medical supervision:
- Specifically – no sleeping tablets, no aspirin, anti-inflammatory medication or sedating painkillers
- No driving
- Team management must liaise with the Carnival Doctor and the Carnival Committee in assessment of the player.; and Players with suspected concussion should not be left alone in the first 24 hours so they should be assigned to the care of a responsible adult or sent immediately for medical assessment.