



### **Illness and Injury Protocol- Welsh Rowing Athletes**

This policy applies to all athletes training with Welsh Rowing squads or groups, including Start, development and Home International Regatta Squads for the time between selection and the end of any return journey.

#### **Illness**

Athletes are expected to:

- Not attend training or competition if they have an infectious illness.
- Inform their coach and other crew members if they are suffering from or recovering from an infectious illness or are feeling unwell. Hiding an illness is not acceptable and puts your team mates at risk.
- Practice good hygiene (wash hands, disinfect equipment – many gastro-intestinal and upper respiratory tract infections can be prevented by good basic hygiene).
- If unwell then:
  - o Refrain from training until they feel they have fully recovered.
  - o Follow medical advice about how much exercise is appropriate.
  - o Withdraw from competition.
- Look after other athletes - if they look unwell ask them how they are feeling and, if they are not well, encourage them to rest and tell a coach.

Your coach will guide you on the amount of time away from training you should take, and you will be expected to respect this decision. Competing or training whilst ill can not only prolong your illness but can, at the most extreme, be fatal.

#### **Weil's Disease.**

The risk of contracting Leptospirosis from recreational water is small, however the serious nature of the disease is such that we must be aware of the dangers and should take simple precautions to reduce the risk of infection:

Cuts and abrasions (including blisters) should be covered with waterproof dressings.

Wear footwear to avoid cuts and protect feet when in the water and landing stages.

Shower after contact with the water.

Wash hands thoroughly before eating or drinking.

If flu-like symptoms develop shortly after contact with the water (1-3 weeks) then your doctor should be contacted and advised of the circumstances of exposure.

## **Injury**

Welsh Rowing follow the Concussion Recognition Tool here: <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Safety-Alert-Concussion.pdf>. All athletes should be assessed using this tool after any head impact.

Any injury should be advised to your coach, who can facilitate an appointment with the Welsh Rowing physio, should this be necessary. This is not only for acute injuries but also overuse.

## **Mental Health**

Athletes are encouraged to talk to their coach if they are experiencing anxiety or mental ill health, or can also discuss this with any of the support staff employed by Welsh Rowing.

Welsh Rowing utilises MIND's guidance to support athletes, and to guide coaches in having conversations about mental health with athletes:

1. Choose an appropriate place – somewhere private and quiet where the person feels comfortable and equal. Possibly a neutral space outside of the training environment, ensure safeguarding guidelines are also followed with regards to location and supervision.
2. Encourage people to talk – people can find it difficult to talk about their mental health but it helps to have an open culture where conversations about mental health are routine and normalised. Ask simple, open and non-judgmental questions and let people explain in their own words how their mental health problem manifests, the triggers, how it impacts on their life and what support they need.
3. Don't make assumptions – don't try to guess what symptoms an athlete might have and how these might affect their ability to train and compete – many people are able to manage their mental health and perform to a high standard but may require support measures to be put into place.
4. Listen to people and respond flexibly – everyone's experience of a mental health problem is different so treat people as individuals and focus on the person, not the problem. Adapt your support to suit the individual and involve people as much as possible in finding solutions to any training related difficulties they're experiencing.
5. Be honest and clear – if there are specific grounds for concern, like impaired performance or missing training frequently, it's important to address these at an early stage.
- 6 Ensure confidentiality – people need to be reassured of confidentiality. It's sensitive information and should be shared with as few people as possible. Create strict policies to ensure this. Discuss with the individual what information they would like shared and with whom.
7. Develop an action plan – work with your athlete to develop an individual action plan which identifies the signs of their mental health problem, triggers for stress, the possible impact on their

training, who to contact in a crisis, and what support people need. The plan should include an agreed time to review the support measures to see if they're working.

8. Encourage people to seek advice and support – people should speak to their GP about available support from the NHS such as talking therapy. Look at how the Welsh Rowing sports psychologist may be utilised effectively, and whether a referral to a Clinical Psychiatrist is needed.

9. Seek advice and support yourself – the Mind Infoline and local Minds can provide information to employers too.

10. Reassure people – people may not always be ready to talk straight away so it's important you outline what support is available, tell them your door is always open and let them know you'll make sure they get the support they need.