

# NRL Cardiac/ECG Screening Information Sheet



**The Greatest Game of All**

Regular exercise is safe and should be encouraged for most young people but there is a very small percentage of the population that have undiagnosed pre-existing cardiac pathology that increases their risk of Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD).

## Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD)

- Infrequent or rare event in the general community
- Tragic and emotional event for all concerned including family and team mates
- Due to unsuspected cardiac conditions/diseases – congenital (inherited) or acquired cardiac malformations
- Majority (~80%) occur in people without symptoms prior to the event
- Much more common in males
- Not all cardiac conditions that can lead to SCD will necessarily be diagnosed via screening protocols/ECG
- AED's (defibrillators) may not always be used successfully in resuscitating an athlete who collapses with a cardiac event

## Why Screen?

- To potentially diagnose cardiac conditions that may put you at increased risk of SCD so that appropriate further investigations and management can be undertaken (Some of these potentially life threatening conditions can be treated successfully allowing a full return to sport)
- To advise you accordingly as to your risk of SCD with continuation of your current level of physical activity as some very rare conditions may require you to consider ceasing your involvement in rugby league/high intensity exercise after further investigation, management and professional advice

## What is involved?

- Cardiac questionnaire and physical examination by your doctor
- Resting ECG (Electrocardiogram)
- Positive findings would require further review and investigation by a Sports Cardiologist

## Who should be screened?

- Elite athletes aged 16 – 25 years old (including NRL and NYC squads) – **2<sup>nd</sup> yearly**
- Elite (NRL) athletes (with no prior screening) over 25 years old – **once**
- Anyone else participating in rugby league at any level (especially 16-25 year olds) with concerns regarding their risks – **discuss with your GP/Club Doctor +/- Cardiologist referral**
- Elite athletes/referees >35 years old should consider Exercise ECG testing

**If you have any concerns or questions please discuss them with your Club Doctor (or GP for non elite players/parents)**

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