



## **HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAM Protocol for return to snow (RTS) and competition (RTC)**

Following a significant injury to a snowboard athlete, it is critical to know that the injury has been adequately assessed and managed, and that the athlete has had sufficient treatment and rehabilitation to allow him/her to return to snowboard training and competition safely, and without risk of further injury. This is particularly important if the injury took place in another country, as quite often the medical records and/or x-rays, CT, MRI etc. results are not as easily available.

The following protocol should be followed via an email thread with all practitioners, National team head coach, Sport Science & Medicine Lead and Sport & High Performance Director.

National Development Group athletes (NDG) must remit all medical records and clearance, Physio assessments and clearance, S&C assessments and clearance, Coach assessment and clearance to the respective support practitioner for approval.

### **Step 1**

**Medical Assessment:** (Discipline Medical Lead) – From a medical point of view (i.e. healing of fractures, recovery from surgery, recovery from concussion) the athlete must be assessed by the medical lead and advised to move on to or continue with physiotherapy and/or strength and conditioning to prepare for medical clearance for return to snow. This medical assessment may also require assessment by the specialist involved as well as the medical lead. IE: ACL surgery requires follow up with the surgeon at 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months. Medical clearance will be given when the MD has determined the athlete has had appropriate recovery time for physiological healing (may require xray) and met all physiotherapy and S and C goals for safe return to snow.

### **Step 2**

**Physiotherapy Clearance:** (Physiotherapist) – The athlete's physiotherapy based goals of regaining range of motion, stability and functional strength have been met or have reached a point where the PT can combine with S and C to continue rehabilitation from the injury/surgery. The athlete can proceed with sport specific training to return to performance level. Assessment is continued by the team MD and PT throughout, and PT and S and C may be simultaneous.

### Step 3

**Strength and Conditioning Clearance:** (Strength and Conditioning Coach) – Physical assessment milestones are met (including objective assessment and comparison to baselines, with minimum of 90% considered for RTS. Can be simultaneous with medical clearance and physiotherapy clearance)

### Step 4

**Clearance by Sport & High Performance Director:** (JF Rapatel) – All the above criteria have been met and the athlete has been “green lighted” or cleared by the team doctor, physiotherapist and S and C coach.

The athlete may now return to on snow training (RTS).

STEP 4: 2<sup>nd</sup> OPINION offered.

### Step 5

**Clearance by Athlete’s Coach** – ready to return to snow – Once the athlete has received clearance from the above members of the Integrated Support Team (IST), the discipline head coach has the final decision as to the athlete’s readiness & ability to snowboard. Before the athlete is cleared to **compete (RTC)**, or cleared to compete at the World Cup/World Championships/Olympic or Paralympic level, the discipline head coach might prescribe a specific, on-snow, return to competition progression. This might include elements such as:

- A determined minimum number of training days on-snow;
- to achieve a minimum result at a Continental, FIS or IPC level competition before being cleared to compete at a World Cup level competition;
- the ability to perform certain skills on-snow;

The final decision to clear the athlete to start competing might not be based on criteria that are 100% objective and might involve the subjective opinion and expertise of the head coach in certain situation.

#### Check List

- MD clearance
- PT clearance
- S and C clearance
- HPD clearance
- Athlete clearance
- Coach athlete clearance