

Personal Injury Insurance: a must-have

Avid sports people could save themselves some hip-pocket pain if they consider taking out sports injury insurance before they have an injury. Not being insurance experts, however, how do you know what you need and who the reputable providers are?

Risk management: adequate sports injury cover

Participation in a sport results in risks that are distinctive to that particular sport. Having adequate insurance plays a vital part in managing those risks. It is extremely important that insurance purchased by individuals - or a sporting organisation - is specifically designed to cover the inherent risks of that sport. For example, an insurance policy written for a retail business or a factory will not necessarily be appropriate for a sporting body. Of course, it is still up to the participant to take steps to minimise risk and avoid injury.

Personal injury - what's covered?

Personal injury insurance provides benefits when the insured is injured as a result of participation in the sport. It also covers sports practice, not just competitive games or matches, travel to and from these activities, at official sports functions and "away" games, for example during a tour for the purpose of participating in sporting events.

Some of the areas usually covered by a sports injury insurance policy include:

- . death,
- . permanent or total disability,
- . permanent partial disability,
- . non-Medicare medical expenses,
- . funeral benefits,
- . loss of income,
- . home help benefit,
- . student assistance benefit and
- . parents' inconvenience allowance.

Check with the provider before taking out a policy to ensure these areas are covered by the policy you are looking at.

Benefits and exclusions

It is extremely important that before you buy insurance you understand the policy benefits and exclusions and have carefully considered the different impacts on your situation. Get professional advice from an insurance broker if you are unsure. Most sporting organisations seek assistance from a broker or insurance agent before choosing a policy for their members.

Sports injury insurance - what do you get?

Personal accident insurance or sports injury insurance covers participants who are injured while playing sport. This kind of insurance is not connected to or dependent on claims for negligence, but simply entitles the injured participant to certain benefits, as set down in the insurance policy, if they are injured.

It normally includes a death and permanent disability cover, and also often includes medical expenses and loss of income. You can elect to have different levels of cover, chosen at the time the policy is bought.

Sports injuries and pregnancy

It is important to note that a personal accident insurance policy generally excludes events that result either directly or indirectly from, or become worse because of, pregnancy, childbirth or miscarriage. However, if a pregnant player participates this does not affect the cover provided under a personal accident policy to other participants.

If a participant was injured while playing sport and the injury is somehow related to her pregnancy, it is probably not be covered by personal accident insurance.

Sporting Associations

Many amateur sporting clubs and associations offer or recommend sports injury insurance. Common policy areas relevant to these sporting groups include: public and products liability, professional indemnity, player accident, property and association liability. Policies can cover both players and referees.

Companies to approach regarding personal injury insurance for sports people include (but are not limited to):

- . Allianz
- . NRMA
- . XLife
- . HBA
- . ING Insurance
- . Lifebroker and
- . Worldwide Sports Insurance