Abstract

Background: Collisions in rugby union and sevens have a high injury incidence and burden, and are also associated with player and team performance. Understanding the frequency and intensity of these collisions is therefore important for coaches and practitioners to adequately prepare players for competition. The aim of this review is to synthesise the current literature to provide a summary of the collision frequencies and intensities for rugby union and rugby sevens based on video-based analysis and microtechnology.

Methods: A systematic search using key words was done on four different databases from 1 January 1990 to 1 September 2021 (PubMed, Scopus, SPORTDiscus and Web of Science).

Results: Seventy-three studies were included in the final review, with fifty-eight studies focusing on rugby union, while fifteen studies explored rugby sevens. Of the included studies, four focused on training—three in rugby union and one in sevens, two focused on both training and match-play in rugby union and one in rugby sevens, while the remaining sixty-six studies explored collisions from match-play. The studies included provincial, national, international, professional, experienced, novice and collegiate players. Most of the studies used video-based analysis (n = 37) to quantify collisions. In rugby union, on average a total of 22.0 (19.0–25.0) scrums, 116.2 (62.7–169.7) rucks, and 156.1 (121.2–191.0) tackles occur per match. In sevens, on average 1.8 (1.7–2.0) scrums, 4.8 (0–11.8) rucks and 14.1 (0–32.8) tackles occur per match.

Conclusions: This review showed more studies quantified collisions in matches compared to training. To ensure athletes are adequately prepared for match collision loads, training should be prescribed to meet the match demands. Per minute, rugby sevens players perform more tackles and ball carries into contact than rugby union players and forwards experienced more impacts and tackles than backs. Forwards also perform more very heavy impacts and severe impacts than backs in rugby union. To improve the relationship between matches and training, integrating both video-based analysis and microtechnology is recommended. The frequency and intensity of collisions in training and matches may lead to adaptations for a "collision-fit" player and lend itself to general training principles such as periodisation for optimum collision adaptation.

Trial Registration PROSPERO registration number: CRD42020191112.

Keywords: Rugby, Microtechnology, Video-based analysis, Collisions, Training, Injury prevention

Key Points

• In this systematic review of collision frequency and intensity in rugby union and rugby sevens, only four
studies quantified collision frequencies and/or intensities in training, three focused on both training and match-play, while 66 studies quantified frequencies and/or intensities of collisions in matches. Further investigation is needed to improve and understand the relationship between training and matches.

- Per minute, rugby sevens players perform more tackles and ball carries into contact than rugby union players and forwards experienced more impacts and tackles than backs. Forwards also perform more very heavy impacts and severe impacts than backs in rugby union.
- Integrating video-based analysis and microtechnology is recommended, and the metrics and grouping variables between training and matches should be consistent.
- The frequency and intensity of collisions in training and matches may lead to adaptations for a “collision-fit” player and lend itself to general training principles such as periodisation for optimum collision adaptation.

### Background

Rugby union and rugby sevens (henceforth called sevens) are invasion team sports that are characterised by frequent high speed running and physical collisions [1, 2]. Although the two rugby codes differ in match duration (sevens = 14 min; rugby union = 80 min) and player numbers (sevens = 7 players; rugby union = 15 players) [3–6], the type of collisions are similar (i.e., tackles, scrums, rucks and mauls) [6]. Winning these collisions is associated with overall team success and player performance [7–9]. For example, Ortega et al. (2009) identified that winning teams complete more tackles than losing teams [7]. These collisions are also physically and technically demanding for players with an associated high injury incidence and burden (injury incidence rate X mean severity) [10–13]. For instance, in senior professional male rugby union players, 29.0 injuries per 1000 player hours occur when being tackled, 19.0 injuries per 1000 player hours occur when tackling and 17.0 injuries per 1000 player hours occur in the ruck/maul [14]. In sevens, 40.4 injuries per 1000 player hours occur when tackling, with 1.2 injuries per 1000 player hours occurring in the mauls and scrums [15].

Given the high injury incidence and burden, and the positive performance outcomes associated with winning collisions in rugby union and sevens, it is important for coaches and practitioners to adequately prepare players for competition. To do this, they need to know the frequency and intensity of these collisions in both training and matches [16]. In matches and training, the frequency and intensity of collisions have been quantified primarily using two methods: video-based analysis and microtechnology. Quantifying the frequency and intensity of collisions using video-based analysis requires the systematic observation and interpretation of video from matches and/or training [17, 18]. Analysing collisions can occur while the matches or training session(s) are underway, although most detailed analyses occur post-match [17]. Previously, video-based analysis was the main method used to quantify collisions in both rugby cohorts [17]. Quantifying collisions in this manner however, is based on human observation, and as such, it is labour intensive and requires reliability checking to reduce bias and subjectivity [16]. For these reasons, a shift to automated methods of collecting collision data through the use of microtechnology has occurred.

In sport, microtechnology typically incorporates global positioning systems (GPS) and micro-electrical mechanical systems (MEMs) that capture the external physical demands of competition and training [19]. Commercially available microtechnology devices for team sports are designed to be unobstructive, so players can wear them during competition and training. One of the first studies using microtechnology to determine physical demands in rugby union was published in 2009 [20], and since then, research using these devices has grown [19]. Initially, GPS was only used to provide information on distance and speed [21, 22]. Since then, MEMs have been built into GPS devices which now house triaxial accelerometers, gyroscopes and magnetometers [22]. Triaxial accelerometers measure acceleration in three different axes (anterior–posterior, medial–lateral and vertical) [16, 22], and the sum of the acceleration in these three axes provides a vector magnitude (g force). This vector magnitude can be used to quantify the intensity of the collision [19, 22]. Each manufacturer has a different algorithm that is used to quantify collisions [23]. As a consequence, validating collision metrics for these devices has been challenging [23]. Although quantifying collisions using microtechnology may be more time efficient than video-based methods, the validity and reliability of microtechnology in rugby union and sevens requires further investigation [16, 24] due to the ambiguity in the current results [25].

To benefit coaches and practitioners, and aid injury prevention and injury management strategies, a synthesis of the frequency and intensity of collisions in rugby union and sevens to date, both in training and matches, is required. For example, a coach who understands the positional match tackle frequencies and intensities can optimise tackle training sessions to meet those position specific match demands. Since one of the roles of coaches and practitioners is to ensure positive adaptations to training and reduce...
maladaptation, understanding the frequency and intensity of collisions may also aid optimising recovery between training and matches. Therefore, the aim of this systematic review to synthesise the collision frequencies and intensities for rugby union and rugby sevens based on video-based analysis and microtechnology.

**Methods**

**Search Strategy**

The search strategy was based on a similar systematic review in rugby league [16]. The current systematic review was carried out in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines [28]. The search was conducted from 1 January 1990 to 1 September 2021 on four different electronic databases (PubMed, Scopus, SPORTDiscus and Web of Science). The search used the following combined key terms for collisions ('tackl*' OR 'collision' OR 'impact*') AND ('dose' OR 'frequency' OR 'intensity' OR 'demands') AND rugby union ('rugby' OR 'rugby union' OR 'rugby sevens'). For example, in PubMed the search was (**tackl* OR collision OR impact**) AND (dose OR frequency OR intensity OR demands) AND (rugby OR rugby union OR rugby sevens). The reference list of the final full-text articles (n = 73) was also examined.

**Selection of Studies**

After consolidating the studies from the different electronic databases, LP removed the duplicates and screened the titles and abstracts (Fig. 1) for eligibility before retrieving the full text [28]. The review was registered with PROSPERO (registration number: CRD42020191112). The full text articles were further screened for eligibility by LP and MN. Any discrepancies in the screening process were discussed until agreed upon. A third researcher was available if consensus on the inclusion of an article could not be reached; however this was not required. The inclusion criteria were (i) any publication that quantified collisions in terms of frequency or intensity in rugby union and/or sevens (ii) study participants within each study had to be over 18 years of age. When collisions were based on ‘impact metrics,’ only impacts > 8 g were included in the data to eliminate possible confusion with running demands (i.e., high intensity accelerations or decelerations) unless stated otherwise [25]. Publications from conferences and annual meetings were excluded. Only peer-reviewed publications were included. Any publication that could not be translated...
into English was excluded. Authors were contacted for detailed information if necessary. The final full-text articles went through the data extraction process.

Collisions were broadly defined as any physical contact made with another player (teammate or opposition), which resulted in an alteration to the player’s momentum. This included collisions such as the tackle (tackling and being tackled), scrums, rucks and mauls [26, 27]. For this review the studies did not need to have a definition to be included.

Data Extraction
Data relating to participant characteristics (i.e., number, age, height, weight, level of competition, sex, cohort), context (i.e., match play or training), method used to quantify the collisions (i.e., video or microtechnology), the model and specifics of the device (i.e., GPS device rate, inertial sensors, number of files, software), video-based analysis characteristics (i.e., camera system, number of cameras, location of the devices and software), and collision characteristics were extracted from the final 73 full-text articles. Collision characteristics included type of collision, number of matches or training sessions, year of competition, absolute frequency (number), collisions in relation to playing time (number of collisions per minute) and the intensity of each collision. Collision intensity was commonly classified as very heavy (8–10 g), severe (> 10 g) or another range that was specific to the device based on the nature of the collision [29].

Assessment of Methodological Quality
The quality of the included studies was assessed using the checklist of Downs and Black’s assessment of methodological quality [30]. Questions 5, 8, 9, 13–15, 19, 21–28 were inapplicable due to the nature of the studies. The assessment was done by LP and MN (Additional file 1: Table S1). No studies were eliminated based on the methodological quality.

Data Analysis
All data were reported in the tables as mean ± standard deviation (SD) unless stated otherwise. Where possible, a meta-analysis (OpenMeta[Analyst]) was completed to produce a pooled mean and 95% confidence intervals (CI). An analysis was only conducted if there were at least two studies with mean and standard deviations. The DerSimonian-Laird continuous random-effects analysis method was used for the meta-analysis, with I²-squared (I²) used to assess the heterogeneity of the data. I² of 0–40% was considered low heterogeneity, 40–75%: moderate heterogeneity and >70% was considered high heterogeneity [16]. The forest plots (mean and 95% CI) presented the results of the meta-analysis.

Results
Identification of Studies
The literature search captured 1114 papers (Fig. 1). After the screening process, 73 publications were included in the final review [3, 5, 8, 20, 23–25, 29, 31–95].

Study Characteristics
In total, 6212 participants were recorded throughout the seventy-three studies (Table 1). Fifteen studies explored sevens (21%) [3, 5, 35–38, 47, 51, 60, 62, 67, 70–72, 78] while fifty-eight studies investigated rugby union (79%) [8, 20, 23–25, 29, 31–34, 39–46, 48–50, 52–59, 61, 63–66, 68, 69, 73–77, 79–95]. Four studies (5%) focused on training (three in rugby union [32, 80, 90] and one in sevens [47]), while two studies investigated training and matches in rugby union (4%) [34, 42] and one in sevens (1%) [51]. The other sixty-six studies (90%) focused on match-play only [3, 5, 8, 20, 23–25, 29, 31, 33, 35–41, 43–46, 48–50, 52–79, 81–89, 91–95]. The studies included, provincial, national, international, professional, experienced, novice and collegiate players. Studies were recorded from the Super Rugby competition [29, 31, 41, 43, 49, 50, 55, 59, 73, 75], Six Nations Championship [8, 33, 88], English Premiership [45, 46, 48, 68], World Rugby Sevens World Series [3, 51, 72], Bledisloe Cup [63], Pro14 [23], and the Rugby World Cup [92, 93].

Twenty-four studies used microtechnology as a method to record collision demands (33%) [20, 29, 32, 35, 36, 38, 42, 47, 48, 51, 53, 58, 59, 61, 62, 76, 77, 80–84, 91, 95] and thirty-seven studies used video-based analysis (51%) [3, 5, 8, 31, 33, 40, 41, 43–46, 49, 50, 54, 55, 57, 60, 63–65, 68–75, 79, 85–89, 92–94] (Table 1). Twelve studies used both microtechnology and video-based analysis to capture collision demands (16%) [23–25, 34, 37, 39, 52, 56, 66, 67, 78, 90]. Seven studies (21%) used the GPSports’ SPI Pro device [29, 39, 81–83, 90, 91] and GPSports’ SPI HPU [34–38, 42, 59], 18% used Catapult Minimax S4 [32, 47, 52, 53, 56, 58] and 12% used the StatSports GPS technology [25, 48, 61, 84]. Specifics of both the microtechnology device and software used are provided in Additional file 1: Table S2. Similarly, camera specifics and the video-based analysis system used can be found in Additional file 1: Table S3.

Microtechnology
Rugby Union Match-Play
Ten studies recorded collision frequency using microtechnology in match-play (14%) [20, 23–25, 39, 52, 53, 58, 84, 91] (Table 2). Two studies in rugby union recorded
Table 1  Characteristics of studies that were included

| Study: author (year) | Number of participants | Male or female | Participant competition level | Age (years): mean ± SD | Height (cm): mean ± SD | Body mass (kg): mean ± SD | Method of data capture | Cohort | Match-play/ training or both |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|
| Austin et al. (2011) [31] | 20 | NR | Super 14 | Front row forwards: 23 ± 2 | Front row forwards: 183 ± 2 | Front row forwards: 144 ± 4 | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| | | | | Back row forwards: 26 ± 3 | Back row forwards: 183 ± 4 | Back row forwards: 103 ± 9 | | | |
| | | | | Inside backs: 22 ± 1 | Inside backs: 179 ± 6 | Inside backs: 87 ± 3 | | | |
| | | | | Outside backs: 24 ± 3 | Outside backs: 182 ± 4 | | | | |
| Bradley et al. (2015) [32] | 44 (24 forwards, 20 backs) | NR | Elite | 21–34 | Forwards: 189 ± 0.6 | Forwards: 110 ± 6.1 | Microtechnology | Rugby union | Training |
| | | | | Backs: 183 ± 0.5 | Backs: 92 ± 7 | | | | |
| Bradley et al. (2017) [33] | NR | NR | Six Nation Championship | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Campbell et al. (2017) [34] | 32 | Male | Premier Grade Club | 24 ± 4 | 177 ± 10 | 88 ± 20 | Microtechnology and video | Rugby union | Both |
| Clarke et al. (2015) [35] | 12 | National Female | State and National | National: 22.3 ± 2.5 | National: 167 ± 04 | National: 65.8 ± 4.6 | Microtechnology | Sevens | Match-play |
| | 10 | State | Male and female International | State: 24.4 ± 4.3 | State: 167 ± 0.3 | State: 66.1 ± 7.9 | | | |
| Clarke et al. (2015) [36] | 12 | National Female | State and National | National: 22.3 ± 2.5 | National: 167 ± 04 | National: 65.8 ± 4.6 | Microtechnology | Sevens | Match-play |
| | 10 | State | Male and female International | State: 24.4 ± 4.3 | State: 167 ± 0.3 | State: 66.1 ± 7.9 | | | |
| Clarke et al. (2016) [37] | 12 | males | Male and female International | Male: 24 ± 3.2 | Male: 184 ± 0.8 | Male: 92 ± 6.9 | Microtechnology and video | Sevens | Match-play |
| | 12 | females | Male and female International | Female: 22.8 ± 3.6 | Female: 169 ± 0.2 | Female: 68.6 ± 4.4 | | | |
| Clarke et al. (2017) [38] | 64 | Male and female Domestic and International | NR | Female: 169 ± 0.2 | Female: 68.6 ± 4.4 | Female: 88.5 ± 10.2 | Microtechnology | Sevens | Match-play |
| | | | | Senior Male: 181 ± 0.5 | Senior Female: 170 ± 0.7 | Senior Female: 70.4 ± 9.3 | | | |
| | | | | Elite Male: 184 ± 0.7 | Elite Female: 169 ± 0.2 | Elite Female: 68.6 ± 4.4 | | | |
| Coughlan et al. (2011) [39] | 2 (one forward, one back) | NR | International | 30 | Forward: 198 | Forward: 111.8 | Microtechnology and video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| | | | | Back: 181 | Back: 94.9 | | | | |
| Cunniffe et al. (2009) [40] | 3 | NR | Elite | 25 ± 3.6 | 193 ± 9.7 | 104.6 ± 10.4 | Microtechnology | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Deutsch et al. (1998) [41] | 24 | Male | Under 19 | 18.4 ± 0.5 | 185 ± 7 | 8.7 ± 9.9 | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Study: author (year) | Number of participants | Male or female | Participant competition level | Age (years): mean ± SD | Height (cm): mean ± SD | Body mass (kg): mean ± SD | Method of data capture | Cohort | Match-play/training or both |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Deutsch et al. (2007) [41] | Forwards: 16 | NR | Super 12 | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Backs: 13 | | | | | | | | | |
| Dubois et al. (2020) [42] | 14 | NR | Professional | 26.9±1.9 | 185±7.9 | 97.6±13.2 | Microtechnology | Rugby union | Both |
| Forwards: 6 | | Backs: 8 | | | | | | | |
| Duthe et al. (2005) [43] | 47 | NR | Super 12 | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Eaton et al. (2006) [44] | 35 | NR | Professional | 20–34 years | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Fuller et al. (2007) [45] | 645 | NR | English Premiership | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Fuller et al. (2008) [46] | 645 | NR | English Premiership | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Gibson et al. (2015) [47] | 12 | Male | International | 27.8±3.9 | 177.8±5.9 | 81±8.3 | Microtechnology | Sevens | Training |
| Grainger et al. (2018) [48] | 38 | NR | English Premiership | 26.4±4.7 | 182.3±30.2 | 100±11 | Microtechnology | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Hendricks et al. (2013) [49] | NR | NR | Super 14 | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Hendricks et al. (2014) [50] | NR | NR | Super 14 | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Hendricks et al. (2018) [8] | NR | NR | Six Nations and Championship | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Hendricks et al. (2019) [3] | NR | NR | Rugby Sevens World Series | NR | NR | NR | Video | Sevens | Match-play |
| Higham et al. (2014) [5] | 196 | Male | International (World Rugby Sevens World Series and Federation of Oceania Rugby Unions Oceania Sevens Championship) | Forwards: 21.6±2.4 | Forwards: 185±0.5 | Forwards: 95.8±6.7 | Microtechnology | Sevens | Both |
| Higham et al. (2016) [51] | 42 | Male | International (World Rugby Sevens World Series and Federation of Oceania Rugby Unions Oceania Sevens Championship) | Backs: 21±2.2 | Backs: 181±0.6 | Backs: 86.2±5.6 | Microtechnology | Sevens | Both |
| Jones et al. (2014) [52] | 28 | Male | European Cup | Forwards: 26.7±2.8 | Forwards: 111.6±5.7 | Forwards: 111.6±5.7 | Microtechnology and video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Study: author (year) | Number of participants | Male or female | Participant competition level | Age (years): mean ± SD | Height (cm): mean ± SD | Body mass (kg): mean ± SD | Method of data capture | Cohort | Match-play/training or both |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Jones et al. (2015)  | 33                     | NR             | Professional                    | Backs: 23.4 ± 2.6      | NR                     | Backs: 94.2 ± 7.9         | Microtechnology          | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Lacome et al. (2016) | 375                    | Male           | International                   | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                  | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Lindsay et al. (2015) | 37                     | NR             | Super 15                        | Front row: 26.6 ± 3.7  | Front row: 186 ± 0.4   | Front row: 112.1 ± 5.1   | Video                  | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Lindsay et al. (2017) | 37                     | NR             | Professional                    | 26 ± 3.5               | 186 ± 0.7              | 104.5 ± 9.3               | Microtechnology and video| Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| MacLeod et al. (2018) | 37                     | Male           | Professional                    | 27.9 ± 3.6             | 185.4 ± 7              | 103.1 ± 12.1             | Microtechnology and video| Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| McIntosh et al. (2010) | NR                    | NR             | Club Level                      | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                  | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| McLaren et al. (2015) | 28                     | Male           | Professional                    | 27 ± 4                 | 187 ± 8                | 101 ± 14                  | Microtechnology          | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| McLellan et al. (2013) | 5                      | Male           | Super 15                        | Forwards: 23 ± 0.2     | Forwards: 193 ± 6.1    | Forwards: 116 ± 1.4      | Microtechnology          | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Owen et al. (2015)    | 33                     | Male           | Super 14                        | Backs: 22.3 ± 1.5      | Backs: 187 ± 1.2       | Backs: 93.7 ± 1.5         | Microtechnology          | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Peeters et al. (2019) | 15                     | Male           | Elite                           | 25.8 ± 3.6             | 179.8 ± 33             | 101.2 ± 13.2             | Video                  | Sevens     | Match-play                 |
| Pollard et al. (2018) | 22                     | Male           | International                   | 27 ± 2.9               | 187 ± 7                | 106.1 ± 14.1             | Microtechnology          | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Portillo et al. (2016) | 16                    | Female          | National                        | 23 ± 2                 | 166 ± 7                | 66 ± 7                   | Microtechnology          | Sevens     | Match-play                 |
| Quarrie et al. (2007) | NR                     | NR             | Bledisloe Cup                   | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                  | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Study: author (year) | Number of participants | Male or female | Participant competition level | Age (years): mean ± SD | Height (cm): mean ± SD | Body mass (kg): mean ± SD | Method of data capture | Cohort | Match-play/ training or both |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Quarrie et al. (2008) [64] | NR                     | NR             | Professional                  | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                    | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Quarrie et al. (2012) [65] | 763                    | NR             | National                      | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                    | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Reardon et al. (2017) [24] | 36                     | NR             | Elite                         | Forwards: 27.2 ± 39    | Forwards: 188 ± 0.8    | Forwards: 111.6 ± 9       | Microtechnology and video | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Reardon et al. (2017) [66] | 39                     | NR             | Elite                         | Backs: 26.4 ± 5.1      | Backs: 181 ± 0.4       | Backs: 92 ± 7.4           | Microtechnology and video | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Reyneke et al. (2018) [67] | 15                     | Female         | International                 | 24.3 ± 3.9             | 168 ± 7.1              | 67.5 ± 6.3                | Microtechnology and video | Sevens     | Match-play                 |
| Roberts et al. (2008) [68] | 29                     | Forwards: 14   | English Premiership           | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                    | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Roberts et al. (2014) [69] | NR                     | Male           | English community level (3–9) | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                    | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Ross et al. (2015) [70]  | 84                     | NR             | International and Provincial  | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                    | Sevens     | Match-play                 |
| Ross et al. (2015) [71]  | 27                     | Male           | International                 | Forwards: 24.4 ± 3.3   | Forwards: 188 ± 4.8    | Forwards: 95.4 ± 63       | Video                    | Sevens     | Match-play                 |
| Ross et al. (2016) [72]  | NR                     | NR             | IRB Sevens World Series      | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                    | Sevens     | Match-play                 |
| Schoeman et al. (2015) [73] | 15                    | NR             | Super Rugby                   | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                    | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Smart et al. (2008) [74] | 23                     | Male           | New Zealand National Provincial Championship | 25 ± 3                | 184 ± 9               | 99.2 ± 10.1               | Video                    | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Smart et al. (2014) [75] | 510                    | NR             | Super 14                      | NR                     | NR                     | NR                        | Video                    | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Suarez-Arrones et al. (2012) [76] | 9                     | NR             | National                      | 25.9 ± 4              | 181.5 ± 6.2            | 90.8 ± 48                 | Microtechnology          | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Suarez-Arrones et al. (2013) [77] | 8                     | Woman          | National                      | Forwards: 26.6 ± 1.9   | Forwards: 173.8 ± 5.9  | Forwards: 76.8 ± 104      | Microtechnology          | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Suarez-Arrones et al. (2014) [78] | 10                    | Male           | National                      | Forwards: 27 ± 26      | Forwards: 170 ± 23     | Forwards: 87.9 ± 11       | Microtechnology and video | Sevens     | Match-play                 |
| Study: author (year) | Number of participants | Male or female | Participant competition level | Age (years): mean ± SD | Height (cm): mean ± SD | Body mass (kg): mean ± SD | Method of data capture | Cohort | Match-play/ training or both |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|
| Takarada (2003) [79]  | 14                     | NR | Elite                        | 23–30                  | 179.8±1                | 87.4±2.2                | Video                  | Match-play |                            |
| Takeda et al. (2014) [80] | 20                 | Male | Collegiate                   | 20±0.6                 | 174±0.5                | 85.4±2                  | Microtechnology         | Rugby union | Training                   |
| Tee et al. (2015) [81] | 19                     | NR | Professional                 | 26±2                   | 186±0.7                | 101.5±12.2              | Microtechnology         | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Tee et al. (2017) [82] | 19                     | NR | Professional                 | 26±2                   | 186±0.7                | 101.5±12.2              | Microtechnology         | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Tee et al. (2020) [83] | 19                     | NR | Professional                 | 26±2                   | 186±0.7                | 101.5±12.2              | Microtechnology         | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Tierney et al. (2020) [23] | 44                 | Male | Guinness PRO14               | 25.7±39               | 187.0±76               | 102.6±12.0              | Microtechnology and video | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Tierney et al. (2021) [84] | 118                 | Male | Elite                        | 24.7±4.1              | 186.5±70               | 101.6±12.2              | Microtechnology         | Rugby union | Match-play                 |
| Tucker et al. (2017) [85] | NR                 | NR | International and National | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Van Rooyen et al. (2008) [86] | 10                 | NR | Professional | 23±3               | 184±8                | 99±15                   | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Van Rooyen et al. (2012) [87] | NR                 | NR | International               | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Van Rooyen et al. (2014) [88] | NR                 | NR | Six Nations                 | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Vaz et al. (2010) [89] | NR | NR | International Rugby Board competitions and Super 12 | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Vaz et al. (2012) [90] | 40                     | NR | Experienced and novice      | 21.6±3.6              | 177.7±7.4              | 81.2±102                | Microtechnology and video | Rugby union | Training |
| Venter et al. (2011) [91] | 17                 | Male | Provincial                  | 18.5±0.5              | 183±6                 | 89.8±10.8               | Microtechnology         | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Villarejo et al. (2013) [92] | 626                | NR | Rugby World Cup             | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Villarejo et al. (2015) [93] | 736                | Male | Rugby World Cup            | NR | NR | NR | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Virr et al. (2014) [94] | 38                     | Female | Premier division club level | 24.1±4                | 168.7±6.5             | 73.4±109                | Video | Rugby union | Match-play |
| Yamamoto et al. (2020) [95] | 298                 | Male | Elite                       | Forwards: 27.9±3.0    | 183.1±6.3             | Forwards: 100.3±72      | Microtechnology         | Rugby union | Match-play |
|                             |                       |     |                             | Backs: 27.7±2.7       | 173.9±7.8             | Backs: 84.2±11.8        |                       |                     |                |

NR not reported
Table 2  Characteristics of collision frequency detected by microtechnology in rugby union and rugby sevens

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/ training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) | Load (AU) |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| **Rugby union**      |                                      |                    |                     |                                   |                                                          |           |
| Bradley et al. (2015) [32] | Training sessions | Contact number | Weekly              | Forwards: 80±25                   | NR                                                      | NR        |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | Backs: 50±22                      |                                                          |           |
| Coughlan et al. (2011) [39] | 1 match  | Collisions       | Number              | Total: 1411                       | NR                                                      | NR        |
|                      |                                      | Tackles            | Total               | Forwards: 838                     | Backs: 573                                               |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | Forwards: 10                      | Backs: 12                                                |           |
|                      |                                      | Average Body Load  |                     |                                    | Forwards: 8.4 G                                         |           |
|                      |                                      | tackle against     |                     |                                    | Backs: 7.8 G                                            |           |
| Cunniffe et al. (2009) [20] | 1 match  | Impacts          | Total               | Forwards: 798                     | NR                                                      | NR        |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | Backs: 1274                       |                                                          |           |
| Jones et al. (2014) [52] | 4 matches | Tackles         | Per match           | 5±3                               | 4±3                                                     | NR        |
|                      |                                      | Contacts hit       | Per match           | 15±6                              | 6±4                                                     |           |
|                      |                                      | Impacts            | Total               | 25±9                              | 15±7                                                    |           |
|                      |                                      | Scrum              | Per match           | 13±5                              | 0                                                       |           |
|                      |                                      | Contacts           | Total               | 31±14                             | 16±7                                                    |           |
| Jones et al. (2015) [53] | 71 matches | Contacts        | Per match           | First half: 12.3±9.5               | NR                                                      | NR        |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | Second half: 12.6±9.8              |                                                          |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | 0–10 min: 2.9±2.5                  |                                                          |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | 10–20 min: 3.1±3                   |                                                          |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | 20–30 min: 4.1±4.6                 |                                                          |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | 30–40 min: 3.7±5                   |                                                          |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | 40–50 min: 4.3±3                   |                                                          |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | 50–60 min: 2.5±2.2                 |                                                          |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | 60–70 min: 2.3±2.1                 |                                                          |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     | 70–80 min: 2.5±2.4                 |                                                          |           |
| MacLeod et al. (2018) [25] | 11 matches | Collisions    | Number per game     | Forwards: Prop: 31±6               | Backs:                     |                                                          |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     |                                 | Prop: 0.4±0.1                                           |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     |                                 | Back three: 0.4±0.1                                      |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     |                                 | Half back: 0.2±0.1                                      |           |
|                      |                                      |                    |                     |                                 | Centre: 0.3±0.1                                          |           |
## Table 2 (continued)

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) | Load (AU) |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Back row: 35 ± 10    | Back row: 0.4 ± 0.2                  |                   |                     |                                  |                                                        |          |
| Load per collision   |                                     |                   |                     |                                  |                                                        |          |
| McLaren et al. (2015) [58] | 15 matches | Impacts | Total | Total: 50 ± 289 | Total: 0.7 ± 0.4 | NR |
| Reardon et al. (2017) [24] | 13 matches | Collisions | Total | Prop: 34 ± 11 |                             | NR |
| Takeda et al. (2014) [80] | Training and simulated match | Tackles | Total number | 37.6 ± 3 | NR | NR |
| Tierney et al. (2020) [23] | Match play | Contacts | Collisions | 10.4 ± 2.5 | 11 | NR | NR |
| Tierney et al. (2021) [64] | Match play | Collision count | Collisions per player per game | 0.4 ± 0.1 | NR | NR | 2.8 ± 1.1 |
| Venter et al. (2011) [91] | 5 matches | Impacts | Total | Back row forwards: 683.4 ± 295 | NR | NR | 474.3 ± 81.9 |
| Rugby sevens | Clarke et al. (2015) [36] | 3–6 matches | Impacts | Total | National: 7300 ± 2200 | NR | NR | State: 5200 ± 2400 |
|                        | Clarke et al. (2016) [37] | 2 matches | Collisions | NR | Men: 35 | NR | NR |
collisions per match [23, 39], while two recorded per position [24, 25]. One study recorded the impacts per min (0.7 ± 0.4 impacts per min) [58]. Macleod et al. (2018) recorded the frequency of collisions per minute per position [25]. Tackles per match [39, 52] and impacts per match [52] for forwards and backs were recorded [20, 39]. Three studies recorded load per collision [25, 39, 84].

Sixteen studies recorded the intensity of collisions by using microtechnology (22%) (Table 3) [20, 25, 29, 39, 42, 48, 59, 61, 76, 77, 81–83, 90, 91, 95]. Forwards on average (frequency) experience 52.5 (29.8–75.2) very heavy impacts and 10.8 (4.4–17.1) severe impacts per match (Fig. 2) [29, 76, 77]. Backs experience on average 41.7 (26.4–57.0) very heavy impacts and 6.7 (5.1–8.4) severe impacts per match [29, 76, 77] (Fig. 2). Three studies recorded the relative frequency of collisions by intensity [81–83]. On average, forwards experience 9.1 (7.5–10.8) impacts > 5 g per min [81, 83] (Fig. 3). Backs experience on average 9.5 (8.1–10.1) impacts > 5 g per min [81, 83]. Note, Tee et al. only included > 5 g impact since it included > 8 g impacts [83]. Players experienced the highest amount of contacts in the first 20–30 min of a match and the least amount of contacts between 60 and 70 min [82]. Forwards experience more very heavy contacts in the second half of the match in comparison to the first half of the match. Backs experience fewer impacts in the second half of the match in comparison to the first half of the match [29]. There was no

Table 2 (continued)

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/ training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) | Load (AU) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Gibson et al. (2015) [47] | 3 weeks training | Tackles | Count | Women: 20 Week 1: 22.8 ± 10.6 | NR | NR |
|                     |                                    |                   |                     | Week 2: 14.6 ± 9.1 Week 3: 15.8 ± 5.7 |                     |                     |
| Portillo et al. (2016) [62] | 5 matches | Tackle | Number/min | NR | Tackle: 0.3 ± 0.1 | NR | NR |
|                     |                                    | Ruck Ball Carry |              | Ruck: 0.3 ± 0.1 Ball Carry: 0.2 ± 0.1 |                     |                     |
| Suarez-Arrones et al. (2014) [78] | 23 matches | Tackle | Whole match | Forwards: 7.4 ± 1.8 Second half: 4.1 ± 1.8 Backs: 4.1 ± 2.4 First half: 2.3 ± 1.8 Second half: 1.9 ± 1.4 |                     |                     |
|                     |                                    | Whole match |              | Backs: 4.1 ± 2.4 First half: 2.3 ± 1.8 Second half: 1.9 ± 1.4 |                     |                     |
|                     |                                    | Ruck | Whole match | Forwards: 1 ± 1.1 First half: 0.4 ± 0.5 Second half: 0.6 ± 0.8 Backs: 0.6 ± 0.9 First half: 0.3 ± 0.5 Second half: 0.4 ± 0.5 |                     |                     |
|                     |                                    | Whole match |              | Backs: 0.6 ± 0.9 First half: 0.3 ± 0.5 Second half: 0.4 ± 0.5 |                     |                     |
|                     |                                    | Scrum | First half: 2.9 ± 0.7 Second half: 1 ± 0.8 |                     |                     |

NR not reported
### Table 3  Characteristics of collision intensity detected by microtechnology in rugby union and rugby sevens

| Study: author (year) | Type of collisions | Frequency of collisions by intensity: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions by intensity: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Rugby union**      |                   |                                               |                                                               |
| Coughlan et al. (2011) [39] | Impacts | Forwards: Very heavy: 53 Severe: 10 | Backs: NR |
|                      |                   | Very Heavy: 40 Severe: 13 | |
| Cunniffe et al. (2009) [20] | Impacts | Forwards: Very heavy: 56 Severe: 13 | Backs: NR |
|                      |                   | Very heavy: 24 Severe: 4 | |
| Dubois et al. (2020) [42] | Impacts (> 8 g) weekly (game included) | Forwards: 23.7 ± 27 | Backs: NR |
|                      |                   | Impacts G: 26.7 ± 38.5 | |
| Grainger et al. (2018) [48] | Impacts | Impacts > 9.01: 229 ± 160 Impacts 9.01–11: 114 ± 79 Impacts 11.01–13: 48 ± 41 | Impacts > 13: 66 ± 44 |
|                      |                   | Impacts: 226 ± 151 Severe: 118 ± 79 Severe: 47 ± 38 | |
| MacLeod et al. (2018) [25] | Impacts | Impacts (>8 g) Prop: 19.1 ± 7 Hooker: 19.6 ± 7 Second row: 17.7 ± 7.1 Back row: 18.7 ± 7.3 | Impacts: 59 ± 40 |
|                      |                   | Forward: 35 ± 23 Second half: 37 ± 25 Total match: 70 ± 43 | |
|                      |                   | Forwards: Very heavy: 32 ± 25 Severe: 24 ± 19 Total match: 54 ± 42 | |
| McLellan et al. (2013) [29] | Impacts | Forwards: Very heavy: First half: 9 ± 3 Second half: 9 ± 6 Total match: 18 ± 7 | Backs: NR |
|                      |                   | First half: 35 ± 23 Second half: 37 ± 25 Total match: 70 ± 43 | |
|                      |                   | Forwards: Very heavy: 32 ± 25 Severe: 24 ± 19 Total match: 54 ± 42 | |
| Owen et al. (2015) [59] | Impacts (first half) | Forwards: Very heavy: 42 ± 21 Severe: 25 ± 11 High level: 120 ± 55 | Backs: NR |
|                      |                   | Very Heavy: 34 ± 18 Severe: 22 ± 12 High level: 99 ± 44 | |
| Pollard et al. (2018) [61] | Collisions | NR Mean of the whole match: | Forwards: 0.5 ± 0.1 |
### Table 3 (continued)

| Study: author (year) | Type of collisions | Frequency of collisions by intensity: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions by intensity: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Suarez-Arrones et al. (2012) [76] | Impacts per match | Forwards: 66.6 ± 48 | Backs: 0.3 ± 0.1 |
| | | Very heavy: 10.4 ± 5 | |
| | | Severe: NR | |
| Suarez-Arrones et al. (2013) [77] | Impacts for the match | Forwards: 39 ± 7.6 | Very heavy: 51.6 ± 3.5 |
| | | Very heavy: 5.2 ± 3.5 | Severe: 6.3 ± 0.6 |
| Tee et al. (2015) [81] | Impacts | NR | |
| | | Impacts > 5G: 10 ± 3 | |
| | | Impacts > 8G: 1.1 ± 0.5 | |
| Tee et al. (2017) [82] | Total impacts | NR | |
| | | Impacts > 5G: First half: 8.7 ± 2.4 | Backs: First half: 9 ± 0.3 |
| | | Q1: 9.3 ± 4.5 | Q1: 9.7 ± 0.8 |
| | | Q2: 9.2 ± 2.4 | Q2: 9.4 ± 0.8 |
| | | Q3: 8.2 ± 3.7 | Q3: 10 ± 0.3 |
| | | Q4: 7.4 ± 2.1 | Q4: 9.6 ± 0.8 |
| | | Second half: 7.9 ± 3.2 | Second half: 9 ± 0.3 |
| | | Q1: 8.2 ± 3.7 | Q1: 9.7 ± 0.7 |
| | | Q2: 9.4 ± 4.8 | Q2: 9.4 ± 3.8 |
| | | Q3: 8.2 ± 3.1 | Q3: 10 ± 3.6 |
| | | Q4: 8.7 ± 4 | Q4: 7.1 ± 4 |
| | | Impacts > 8G: First half: 0.8 ± 0.3 | |
| | | Q1: 0.8 ± 0.6 | Q1: 1.1 ± 0.5 |
| | | Q2: 0.9 ± 0.4 | Q2: 1.1 ± 0.4 |
| | | Q3: 0.6 ± 0.3 | Q3: 1.1 ± 0.4 |
| | | Q4: 0.8 ± 0.5 | Q4: 1.1 ± 0.7 |
| | | Second half: 0.7 ± 0.3 | Second half: 1.1 ± 0.4 |
| | | Q1: 0.8 ± 0.5 | Q1: 1.1 ± 0.5 |
| | | Q2: 0.8 ± 0.4 | Q2: 1.2 ± 0.6 |
| | | Q3: 0.7 ± 0.4 | Q3: 1.1 ± 0.5 |
| | | Q4: 0.8 ± 0.4 | Q4: 0.9 ± 0.7 |
| Tee et al. (2020) [83] | Impacts per game (> 5 G) | NR | |
| | | Impacts > 5G: 8.3 ± 2.7 | Backs: 9.5 ± 3.1 |
| | | Q1: 11 ± 5 | Q1: 10 ± 4 |
| | | Q2: 8 ± 2 | Q2: 10 ± 4 |
| | | Q3: 8 ± 4 | Q3: 10 ± 3 |
| Study: author (year) | Type of collisions | Frequency of collisions by intensity: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions by intensity: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vaz et al. (2012) [90] | Impacts | Novice: <br> Very heavy: 21.3 ± 17.1 <br> Severe: 4.7 ± 9.1 <br> 189.8 ± 93.3 | Q4: 8 ± 3 |
|                      |        | Experienced: <br> Very heavy: 14 ± 10.4 <br> Severe: 1.6 ± 2.4 <br> 182.5 ± 61.4 | Q4: 9 ± 3 |
| Venter et al. (2011) [91] | Impacts | Severe impacts > 10G: <br> Front row forwards: 8 ± 4.6 <br> Inside backs: 12.2 ± 3.2 | NR |
| Yamamoto et al. (2020) [95] | Impacts total | Impacts 8.1–10 and > 10 g: (mean ± Standard error) <br> Forwards: 202.3 ± 14.5 <br> Props: 192.4 ± 17.6 <br> Hooker: 197.2 ± 24.7 <br> Locks: 225.4 ± 36 <br> Flankers: 181.8 ± 11 <br> No. 8: 196 ± 17.9 | NR |
|                      |        | Impacts > 10 g: (mean ± Standard error) <br> Forwards: 48 ± 4.3 <br> Props: 40.5 ± 7 <br> Hooker: 20.5 ± 5.1 <br> Locks: 57 ± 10.1 <br> Flankers: 42.6 ± 3.8 <br> No. 8: 50.2 ± 8.5 | Impacts > 10 g: (mean ± Standard error) <br> Forwards: 34.6 ± 4.3 <br> Props: 35.5 ± 7 <br> Hooker: 19.2 ± 5.1 <br> Locks: 28.5 ± 9.1 <br> Flankers: 35.6 ± 3.8 <br> No. 8: 36.3 ± 8.5 |
| Rugby sevens | Impacts | Day one: <br> National: 5–6 games <br> National: 32 ± 14 <br> National: 26 ± 18 <br> Impacts > 10 g: <br> National: 15 ± 6 <br> State: 12 ± 7 | Day two: <br> National: 34 ± 24 <br> National: 23 ± 17 <br> Impacts > 10 g: <br> National: 17 ± 9 <br> State: 10 ± 5 |
| Clarke et al. (2015) [35] | Impacts | Impacts > 10 g: <br> National: 29 ± 11 <br> State: 22 ± 11 | NR |
| Clarke et al. (2015) [36] | Impacts | Impacts > 10 g Elite: <br> Male: 25 ± 11.2 <br> Female: 12.6 ± 4.7 <br> Impacts > 10 g Senior: <br> Male: 11.8 ± 6.6 <br> Female: 10.2 ± 7.1 | NR |
| Clarke et al. (2017) [38] | Impacts | Impacts > 10 g Elite: <br> Male: 25 ± 11.2 <br> Female: 12.6 ± 4.7 <br> Impacts > 10 g Senior: <br> Male: 11.8 ± 6.6 <br> Female: 10.2 ± 7.1 | NR |
| Higham et al. (2016) [51] | Impacts during the 22 matches | NR | Forwards: 26.2 ± 10.7 |
difference in impacts > 8 g per min for backs and forwards across the match [81]. Forwards experience more impacts > 5 g per min in 0–10 and 50–60 min and experienced the least amount in the 20–30 min, 40–50 min and 60–70 min intervals of the match. Backs experience more impacts > 5 g in the 0–10 min interval of the match and the 20–30 min interval of the match and the least in the 70–80 min interval [81].

**Rugby Union Training**

Two studies recorded collision frequency using microtechnology during training (3%) [32, 80]. Bradley et al. (2015) recorded the contact number of weekly training sessions of forwards and backs. Note, match data were also included in this training week [32]. Takeda et al. (2014) recorded 10.4 ± 2.5 tackles and 37.6 ± 3.0 contacts during a training simulated match [80].

**Sevens Match-Play**

Eight studies (11%) reported collision frequency using microtechnology during match-play [35–38, 47, 51, 62, 78]. One study reported positional groupings (forwards and backs) [78], another study reported the level of play [36] and another study reported collision frequency by sex [37] (Table 2). Collision types included impacts, collisions, tackles, rucks and scrums. Only one study recorded the relative frequency of tackles, ball carries in contact and rucks [62] and another study recorded relative frequency of impacts for forwards and backs [51].

Of the eight studies, only five reported the intensity of collisions (63%) (Table 3) [35, 36, 38, 51, 78]. Three studies recorded 16.9 (12.5–21.2) impacts > 10 g per match (Fig. 4) [35, 36, 38].

**Sevens Training**

Only one study reported tackle frequency during training (on average 17.8 ± 4.4 tackles per week) [47].

**Video-Based Analysis**

**Rugby Union Match-Play**

Thirty-seven studies recorded the collision frequency using video-based analysis methods (51%) [8, 24, 31, 33, 34, 40, 41, 43–46, 49, 50, 52, 54–57, 63–66, 68, 69, 73–75, 79, 85–90, 92–94] (Table 4). Thirty-five studies were conducted during matches (95%) [8, 24, 31, 33, 40, 41, 43–46, 49, 50, 52, 54–57, 63–66, 68, 69, 73–75, 79, 85–89, 92–94], one investigated training (3%) [90] and one study investigated matches and training (3%) [34]. On average (frequency) a total of 22.0 (19.0–25.0) scrums [33, 41, 44, 52, 63, 74, 94], 116.2 (62.7–169.7) rucks [8, 63], and 156.1 (121.2–191.0) tackles occur per match (Fig. 5) [8, 49, 50, 63, 64, 87–89]. On average, forwards experience 12.8 (7.5–18.1) tackles [41, 43, 52, 68, 74] and backs experience 7.6 (4.3–10.9) tackles (Fig. 6) [41, 43, 52, 68, 74]. On average front row forwards perform 10.5 (5.7–15.2) tackles [31, 34, 43], back row forwards perform 15.9 (10.1–21.8) tackles [31, 43], inside backs perform 17.2 (3.6–30.9) tackles [31, 43] and outside backs perform 8.9 (2.0–15.7) tackles per match (Fig. 7) [31, 34, 43]. Props experience on average 5.5 (1.2–9.8)

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**Table 3 (continued)**

| Study: author (year) | Type of collisions | Frequency of collisions by intensity: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions by intensity: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Suarez-Arrones et al. (2014) [78] | Impacts | Forwards: | Backs: |
| | | Very Heavy: | Very Heavy: |
| | | First half: 9 ± 5.1 | First half: 8 ± 6.1 |
| | | Second half: 7 ± 3.7 | Second half: 6.6 ± 3.8 |
| | | Severe: | Severe: |
| | | First half: 0.7 ± 1 | First half: 0.9 ± 1.1 |
| | | Second half: 1.4 ± 1.3 | Second half: 1.9 ± 1.8 |
| | | Impacts > 7 g: | Impacts > 7 g: |
| | | Whole match: 45.1 ± 24.5 | Whole match: 41.8 ± 20.7 |
| | | NR | NR |

NR not reported
tackles per match [44, 65], locks experience 4.5 (3.6–5.4) tackles per match [44, 65], hookers experience 6.3 (5.2–7.4) tackles [44, 65] and scrumhalves experience 6.4 (1.8–11.0) tackles per match [44, 65] (Fig. 8).

**Rugby Union Training**

Only one study reported collision frequency during training [90]. Vaz et al. (2012) reported that novice players perform an average of 28.2 ± 3.3 tackles during
small-sided games, while experienced players perform 48.7 ± 3.3 tackles on average [90].

Sevens Match Play
Eight studies recorded the collision frequency by using video-based analysis (11%) (Table 4) [3, 5, 37, 60, 67, 70–72]. Ross et al. (2015) recorded the relative frequency of rucks and tackles at provincial and international level [70]. Three studies recorded the frequency of collisions [37], contact actions [60], tackles, being tackled (ball-carrier) and scrums (in relation to high and low scoring matches) [67]. Clarke et al. (2016) recorded 51 collisions for males and 44 collisions for females in a single match [37]. On average, 14.1 (0–32.8) tackles occur per match [3, 67], 4.8 (0–11.8) rucks per match [5, 72] and 1.8 (1.7–2.0) scrums per match [5, 67, 71] (Fig. 9). Finally, backs and forwards experience more contacts in the second half of the match compared to the first half [60].

Sevens Training
No video-based training studies were found for sevens.

Discussion
To our knowledge, this is the first systematic review on quantifying collision frequency and intensity in rugby union and rugby sevens. This review demonstrates that video-based analysis and microtechnology are the main methods used to quantify collisions in rugby union and sevens. Not surprisingly, the absolute collision frequency during sevens matches was lower than rugby union due to the shorter duration of the game and fewer players on the field. When comparing relative frequencies though, rugby union players seem to perform less tackles and ball carries into contact than sevens players, while rucks per minute were similar between the two rugby codes [55, 70]. Expressing collision frequencies relative to playing time provides coaches and players with the ‘collision density’ [96], a metric that can potentially be used in training.
### Table 4  Characteristics of collision frequency detected by video-based analysis in rugby union and rugby sevens

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| **Rugby union**      |                                    |                    |                     |                                   |                                                        |
| Austin et al. (2011) [31] | 7 matches                          | Tackling           | Number during match play | Front row forwards: 20±4 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Back row forwards: 19±4           |                                                        |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Inside backs: 25±13               |                                                        |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Outside backs: 20±7               |                                                        |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Front row forwards: 62±13         |                                                        |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Back row forwards: 68±15           |                                                        |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Inside backs: 17±7                |                                                        |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Outside backs: 14±5               |                                                        |
| Bradley et al. (2017) [33] | 60 matches                         | Scrums             | Scrum (count) total: | 2013: 16.9±4.3 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | 2014: 14.7±3.3                  |                                                        |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | 2015: 14.5±3.3                  |                                                        |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | 2016: 16.5±4.5                  |                                                        |
| Campbell et al. (2017) [34] | 14 matches                          | Tackles            | Per match or training session | Match: 5.6±3                   |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Training: 1.7±1.8               | 0.07±0.05 0.02                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     |                                     |                                                        |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Outside backs: 1.5±1             | 0.01±0.01 0.01                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Centres: 5.7±2.6                 | 0.06±0.02 0.03                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Halves: 4.5±2.4                  | 0.05±0.02 0.02                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Loose forwards: 7.2±3.2           | 0.08±0.03 0.02                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Locks forwards: 6±2.9             | 0.07±0.04 0.02                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Front row forwards: 5.6±3         | 0.07±0.05 0.02                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Rucks                             |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Loose forwards: 12.9±4.2          | 0.1±0.04 0.01                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Locks forwards: 15±6.4            | 0.2±0.1 0.01                                      |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Front row forwards: 10.9±4.5      | 0.2±0.1 0.01                                      |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Mauls                             |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Loose forwards: 3.1±2.7           | 0.03±0.03 0.01                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Locks forwards: 3.3±3             | 0.03±0.03 0.02                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Front row forwards: 2.9±2.6       | 0.04±0.04 0.02                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Scrum                              |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Loose forwards: 23.4±3.9          | 0.3±0.06 0.02                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Locks forwards: 21.4±7.2          | 0.3±0.1 0.01                                      |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Front row forwards: 21.7±5.5      | 0.3±0.2 0.01                                      |
| Deutsch et al. (1998) [40] | 4 matches                          | Ruck/maul          | Total                | Props and Locks: 72±7             |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Back row: 78±8                    | NR                                                    |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Inside backs: 12±2                |                                                        |
|                      |                                    |                    |                     | Outside backs: 9±4                |                                                        |
| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Deutsch et al. (2007) [41] | 9 matches                           | Scrum              | Props and Locks: 32 ± 3 Back row: 35 ± 1 | Backs: NR | |
|                       |                                     | Ruck/maul          | Forwards:            | 66.9 ± 15.8                       | 9.5 ± 5.7 |
|                       |                                     |                   | Total                | 38.2 ± 8.7                        | |
|                       |                                     | Tackling           | 23.1 ± 14            | 23.4 ± 10.2                       | |
| Duthie et al. (2005) [43] | 16 matches                          | Static exertion    | No per game          | Front row: 78 ± 16                | Inside back: 27 ± 10 |
|                       |                                     |                   | Back row: 82 ± 17    |                                    | Outside back: 13 ± 5 |
|                       |                                     |                   | Total: 80 ± 17       |                                    | |
|                       |                                     | Tackles            | No per game          | Front row: 10 ± 8                 | Inside back: 11 ± 6 |
|                       |                                     |                   | Back row: 13 ± 5     |                                    | Outside back: 7 ± 4 |
|                       |                                     |                   | Total: 11 ± 7        |                                    | Total: 9 ± 6 |
| Eaton et al. (2006) [44] | 6 matches                           | Rucks and mauls    | Number               | Prop: 38 ± 12                      | NR |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Hooker: 49 ± 10                   | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Lock: 49 ± 19                      | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Loose: 48 ± 13                     | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Scrum half: 15 ± 5                 | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Inside back: 15 ± 9                | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Outside back: 13 ± 6               | |
|                       |                                     | Tackling Tackler   | Prop: 8 ± 4          | Hooker: 8 ± 4                      | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Lock: 11 ± 3                       | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Loose: 13 ± 6                      | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Scrum half: 11 ± 4                 | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Inside back: 9 ± 4                 | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Outside back: 6 ± 3                | |
|                       |                                     | Tackled            | Prop: 5 ± 3          | Hooker: 7 ± 4                      | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Lock: 4 ± 2                        | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Loose: 8 ± 5                       | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Scrum half: 9 ± 4                  | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Inside back: 5 ± 3                 | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Outside back: 5 ± 3                | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Average total                      | 29 ± 6 |
| Fuller et al. (2007) [45] | 50 matches                          | Contact events    | Total                | 22,842                            | NR |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Scrum: Total 1447                 | |
|                       |                                     |                   |                      | Tackle: Total 11,048               | |
### Table 4 (continued)

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Fuller et al. (2008) [46] | 26 matches | Rucks Total | Total | 7124 | NR |
|                      |          | Mauls Total | General play total | 921 | 6219 |
|                      |          | Tackles | One on one tackles | No of tackles in general play: | Tackler-1 (all): 3558 |
|                      |          |         |                       | Arm: 1690 | Collision: 384 |
|                      |          |         |                       | Jersey: 93 | Lift: 16 |
|                      |          |         |                       | Shoulder: 826 |
|                      |          |         |                       | Smoother: 526 |
|                      |          |         |                       | Tap: 23 |
|                      |          | Double tackles | No of tackles in general play: | Tackler-2 (all): 2512 |
|                      |          |         |                       | Arm: 1443 | Collision: 14 |
|                      |          |         |                       | Jersey: 22 | Lift: 3 |
|                      |          |         |                       | Shoulder: 358 |
|                      |          |         |                       | Smoother: 527 |
|                      |          |         |                       | Tap: 2 |
|                      |          | Arm double tackles | No of tackles in general play: | Ball Carrier: |
|                      |          |         |                       | Forward: 650 | Back: 750 |
|                      |          | One-on-one collision tackles: | No of tackles in general play: | Ball Carrier: |
|                      |          |         |                       | Forward: 146 | Back: 217 |
| Hendricks et al. (2013) [49] | 21 matches | Tackles | Per match | 114 ± 20 | NR |
|                      |          | Scrums Total | Total | 199 |
|                      |          | Maul Total | Total | 152 |
| Hendricks et al. (2014) [50] | 18 matches | Tackles | Per match | 116 ± 20 | NR |
| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hendricks et al. (2018) [8] | 12: Six Nations competitors | Tackles | Each competition week | Per team | 149 | Per team | 131 | Total | 4479 | NR |
| | 15: Championship | | | | | | | | | |
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## Table 4 (continued)

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/ training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
|                       |                                       | Rucks: Total       |                      |                                   | Loose forwards: 0.2 ± 0.1<br>Inside backs: 0.1 ± 0.1<br>Outside backs: 0.07 ± 0.1<br>Groups: 0.2 ± 0.2<br>Forwards: 0.3 ± 0.3<br>Backs: 0.1 ± 0.1<br>Front row: 0.3 ± 0.1<br>Locks: 0.3 ± 0.1<br>Loose forwards: 0.4 ± 0.4<br>Inside backs: 0.2 ± 0.1<br>Outside backs: 0.1 ± 0.03<br>Groups: 0.1 ± 0.1<br>Forwards: 0.1 ± 0.1<br>Backs: 0.1 ± 0.1<br>Front row: 0.1 ± 0.1<br>Locks: 0.1 ± 0.02<br>Loose forwards: 0.1 ± 0.1<br>Inside backs: 0.1 ± 0.1<br>Outside backs: 0.1 ± 0.1 |
|                       |                                       | Ball carries Total |                      |                                   |                                                                                           |
| Lindsay et al. (2017) [56] | 2 matches                             | Impacts Total     | Game 1: 21.3 ± 13.4 |                                   |                                                                                           |
| McIntosh et al. (2010) [57] | 77 matches (15 Elite, 15 Grade, 24 < 20) | Collisions Total  | Game 2: 26.8 ± 13.5 | Elite: 1422                        |                                                                                           |
| Quarrie et al. (2007) [63] | 26 matches                            | Number of match activities | 1995: 33 ± 7<br>22 ± 8 | 2004: 26 ± 7<br>27 ± 9 |                                                                                           |
| Quarrie et al. (2008) [64] | 434 matches                           | Tackle events Total analysed | 140,269<br>270 ± 25 | Per game: 203 ± 29 |                                                                                           |
| Quarrie et al. (2012) [65] | 27 matches                            | Scrum Per match Prop: 25 ± 7.8 |                            |                                    |                                                                                           |
### Table 4  (continued)

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Fly Half: 0.2 ± 0.8  | Prop: 7.9 ± 3.6                    |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Midfield back: 0.3 ± 0.8 | Hooker: 9.7 ± 3.8                 |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Wing: 0.2 ± 1        | Lock: 11.3 ± 8                     |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Full back: 0.3 ± 0.8 | Flankers: 14.1 ± 4                 |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Safe tackles Per match | Number 8: 12 ± 4                   |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Wing: 0.2 ± 1        | Scrum Half: 8.2 ± 3.3               |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Full back: 0.3 ± 0.8 | Fly Half: 9.7 ± 3.5                 |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Safe tackles Per match | Midfield back: 10 ± 4              |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Wing: 0.2 ± 1        | Full back: 4.1 ± 2.3                |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Successful tackles Per match | Prop: 3.6 ± 2.6                   |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Hooker: 6.2 ± 3.2    | Lock: 4.7 ± 2.8                    |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Flankers: 6.1 ± 3.4  | Number 8: 9.7 ± 3.9                 |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Scrum Half: 4.3 ± 2.7 | Fly Half: 3.9 ± 2.6                 |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Full back: 6.5 ± 3.1 | Midfield back: 6.5 ± 3.1            |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Wing: 5.4 ± 2.9      | Full back: 6.1 ± 3.1                |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Number of times tackled | Prop: 33 ± 8                        |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Hooker: 29 ± 8       | Second row: 33 ± 7                  |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Back row: 42 ± 8     | Scrum half: 10 ± 6                  |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Out half: 19 ± 3     | Centre: 23 ± 7                     |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Wing: 22 ± 3         | Fullback: 20 ± 5                    |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Reardon et al. (2017) [24] | 13 matches                           | Collisions         | Total                | Prop: 33 ± 8                       | NR                                                     |
| Hooker: 29 ± 8       | Second row: 33 ± 7                  |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Back row: 42 ± 8     | Scrum half: 10 ± 6                  |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Out half: 19 ± 3     | Centre: 23 ± 7                     |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Wing: 22 ± 3         | Fullback: 20 ± 5                    |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Reardon et al. (2017) [66] | 17 matches                           | Collisions         | NR                   | NR                                |                                                        |
| Hooker: 29 ± 8       | Second row: 33 ± 7                  |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Back row: 42 ± 8     | Scrum half: 10 ± 6                  |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Out half: 19 ± 3     | Centre: 23 ± 7                     |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Wing: 22 ± 3         | Fullback: 20 ± 5                    |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Roberts et al. (2008) [68] | NR                                | Forwards:          | Backs:               |                                    |                                                        |
| Rucks                | Number                              | 35 ± 8             | 11 ± 6               |                                    |                                                        |
| Mauls                |                                     | 25 ± 8             | 4 ± 4                |                                    |                                                        |
| Scrums               |                                     | 21 ± 12            | 4 ± 4                |                                    |                                                        |
| Tackle               |                                     | 14 ± 4             | 10 ± 4               |                                    |                                                        |
| Roberts et al. (2014) [69] | 30 matches (10 from each group: A, B, C) | Collisions         | Total analysed       | 370                                | NR                                                     |
| Hooker: 29 ± 8       | Second row: 33 ± 7                  |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Back row: 42 ± 8     | Scrum half: 10 ± 6                  |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Out half: 19 ± 3     | Centre: 23 ± 7                     |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Wing: 22 ± 3         | Fullback: 20 ± 5                    |                     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
### Table 4 (continued)

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      |                                    | Scrum              | Per match            | 32.2                              | 140.9                                           | NR                                                              |
|                      |                                    | Tackles            | Per match            | 115.0                             | 23.4                                            | 60                                                              |
| Schoeman et al.      | 30 matches                         | Rucks              | Per match            |                                   |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    | Mauls              | Per match            |                                   |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    | Tackles            | Per position         |                                   |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Total tackles in 30 games:         |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Loose-head prop: 568              |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Hooker: 475                       |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Tight-head prop: 553              |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Loose-head lock: 666              |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Tight-head lock: 674              |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Blind-side flank: 742             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Open-side flank: 868              |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Eighthman: 797                    |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Scrum-half: 423                   |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Fly-half: 505                     |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Left wing: 277                    |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Inside centre: 668                |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Outside centre: 515               |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Right wing: 319                   |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Full-back: 301                    |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Mean collision rate/80 min:        |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Loose-head prop: 39.3             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Hooker: 38.5                      |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Tight-head prop: 42.1             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Loose-head lock: 44.8             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Tight-head lock: 41.2             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Blind-side flank: 46.1            |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Open-side flank: 50.9             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Eighthman: 43.1                   |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Scrum-half: 16.3                  |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Fly-half: 19.5                    |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Left wing: 19.4                   |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Inside centre: 32.3               |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Outside centre: 25.7              |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Right wing: 19.9                  |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Full-back: 20.5                   |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Mean tackle rate/80 min:           |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Loose-head prop: 12.1             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Hooker: 11.1                      |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Tight-head prop: 13.2             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Loose-head lock: 13.7             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Tight-head lock: 14.1             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Blind-side flank: 16.6            |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Open-side flank: 17.3             |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Eighthman: 14.7                   |                                                 |                                                                 |
|                      |                                    |                    |                      | Scrum-half: 8.9                   |                                                 |                                                                 |
Table 4 (continued)

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Fly-half: 9.4                     |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Left wing: 5.2                    |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Inside centre: 12.9               |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Outside centre: 9.9              |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Right wing: 6.3                   |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Full-back: 5.4                    |                                                       |
| Smart et al. (2008) [74] | 5 matches                           | Tackles made       | Per match            | 13.6 ± 7.5                        | 6.5 ± 4.7                                             |
|                       |                                     | Scrum              | Number               | 12 ± 4.4                          | 0.6 ± 0.2                                             |
|                       |                                     | Scrum              | Total                | 147.4 ± 89.8                      | 0.2 ± 0.1                                             |
|                       |                                     | Impact             | Per match            | 43.6 ± 18.3                       |                                                       |
| Smart et al. (2014) [75] | 296 matches                          | Tackles            | Successful tackles (%) | Forwards: 88 ± 14                 |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Backs: 80 ± 20                    |                                                       |
| Takarada (2003) [79]  | 2 matches                            | Tackle             | Mean tackles per match | 14 ± 7.4                          |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Forwards: NR                      |                                                       |
| Tucker et al. (2017) [85] | 1516 matches                        | Rucks              | Per match            | 162.9                             |                                                       |
|                       |                                     | Mauls              | Per match            | 104                               |                                                       |
|                       |                                     | Tackles            | Per match            | 158                               |                                                       |
|                       |                                     | Tackles/            |                      | Fly half: 5                       |                                                       |
|                       |                                     | player/            |                      | Scrum half: 3.8                   |                                                       |
|                       |                                     | match              |                      | Centre: 5.8                       |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Full back: 2.1                    |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Wing: 2.7                         |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Hooker: 6.9                       |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Number 8: 6.4                     |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Prop: 5.5                         |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Lock: 6.1                         |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Flanker: 7.4                      |                                                       |
| Van Rooyen et al. (2008) [86] | 7 matches                           | Impact contacts    | Average per game     | Total: 386                         |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Forwards: 257                     |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Backs: 125                        |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Scrum:                             |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Forwards: 81                      |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Ruck:                              |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Forwards: 48                      |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Maul:                              |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Forwards: 14                      |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Backs: 4.5                        |                                                       |
| Van Rooyen et al. (2012) [87] | 69 matches                          | Tackles            | Total per match       | 21,886 (average 159 ± 42)         |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | 6 Nations: 165 ± 28               |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | Tri Nations: 141 ± 24             |                                                       |
|                       |                                     |                    |                      | RWC: 156 ± 47                     |                                                       |
| Study: author (year)               | Number of matches/training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition                                                                 | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD          | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Van Rooyen et al. (2014) [88]     | 15 matches                          | Tackle             | Tackle situations per match                                                           | Average: 191±32                              | NR                                                       |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                       | Average winning team: 89±30                 |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Average losing team: 101±24                 |                                           |
| Vaz et al. (2010) [89]            | IRB competitions: 64 matches         | Tackles made: Total|                                                                                       | 88±27.6                                     |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Average winning team: 89±37.8              |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Average losing team: 101±24                |                                           |
| Vaz et al. (2012) [90]            | Training session (Small sided games) | Tackles made:      |                                                                                       | 28.2±3.3                                    |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Front row: 10                                |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 10.9                             |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back row: 14.3                               |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Scrum halves: 12.5                           |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Middle backs: 10.5                          |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back three: 5.9                              |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Front row: 8                                 |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 8.6                              |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back row: 11.2                               |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Scrum halves: 8.3                            |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Middle backs: 7.2                           |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back three: 3.7                              |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Front row: 0.7                               |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 0.6                              |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back row: 1.1                                |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Scrum halves: 1.7                            |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Middle backs: 1.2                           |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back three: 0.9                              |                                           |
| Villarejo et al. (2013) [92]      | 48 matches                          | Tackles            | Attempted tackles                                                                     | 28.2±3.3                                    |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Front row: 10                                |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 10.9                             |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back row: 14.3                               |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Scrum halves: 12.5                           |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Middle backs: 10.5                          |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back three: 5.9                              |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Front row: 8                                 |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 8.6                              |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back row: 11.2                               |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Scrum halves: 8.3                            |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Middle backs: 7.2                           |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back three: 3.7                              |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Front row: 0.7                               |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 0.6                              |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back row: 1.1                                |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Scrum halves: 1.7                            |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Middle backs: 1.2                           |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back three: 0.9                              |                                           |
| Villarejo et al. (2015) [93]      | 48 matches                          | Tackles            | Attempted tackles                                                                     | Winning team: 10.5±14.04                    | Losing team: 9.4±12.4                         |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 10.2±8.6                        |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back row: 14.5±14.6                         |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Scrum halves: 9.5±11.1                       |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Inside backs: 9.3±12.9                       |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Outside backs: 5.5±9.6                       |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Effective tackles                            |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Front row: 8.9±12.9                          |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 8.4±7.3                          |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Winning team: 10.5±14.04                    | Losing team: 9.4±12.4                         |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 10.2±8.6                        |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back row: 14.5±14.6                         |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Scrum halves: 9.5±11.1                       |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Inside backs: 9.3±12.9                       |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Outside backs: 5.5±9.6                       |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Effective tackles                            |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Front row: 8.9±12.9                          |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 8.4±7.3                          |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Winning team: 10.5±14.04                    | Losing team: 9.4±12.4                         |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 10.2±8.6                        |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Back row: 14.5±14.6                         |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Scrum halves: 9.5±11.1                       |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Inside backs: 9.3±12.9                       |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Outside backs: 5.5±9.6                       |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Effective tackles                            |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Front row: 8.9±12.9                          |                                           |
|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                                        | Second row: 8.4±7.3                          |                                           |
Table 4 (continued)

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/ training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Back row: 12 ± 11.6  | Back row: 10.6 ± 14.9                |                    |                      |                                  |                                               |
| Scrum halves: 7.5 ± 9.3 | Scrum halves: 8.8 ± 15.4            |                    |                      |                                  |                                               |
| Inside backs: 7.02 ± 10.9 | Inside backs: 7.1 ± 7.2            |                    |                      |                                  |                                               |
| Outside backs: 4 ± 7.5 | Outside backs: 3.3 ± 3.7           |                    |                      |                                  |                                               |
| *Ineffective tackles:* | Front row: 0.5 ± 2                |                    |                      |                                  |                                               |
| Second row: 0.5 ± 1.1 | Second row: 0.8 ± 1.5              |                    |                      |                                  |                                               |
| Back row: 1 ± 4.1    | Back row: 1.1 ± 2.8                 |                    |                      |                                  |                                               |
| Scrum halves: 1.1 ± 3.1 | Scrum halves: 2.3 ± 6             |                    |                      |                                  |                                               |
| Inside backs: 0.7 ± 2.03 | Inside backs: 1.5 ± 2.8         |                    |                      |                                  |                                               |
| Outside backs: 0.5 ± 1.7 | Outside backs: 1.4 ± 6.1       |                    |                      |                                  |                                               |

Virr et al. (2014) [94] 10 matches Ruck/maul/tackle Total number

| Scrum: 61 ± 12 | Back: 25 ± 11 |
|----------------|--------------|
| 33 ± 7         |              |

Clarke et al. (2016) [37] 2 matches Collisions Collisions

| Men: 51 | Backs: NR |
|---------|-----------|
| Women: 44 |           |

Hendricks et al. (2019) [3] 135 matches Tackles Per match

| Per match | Backs: NR |
|------------|-----------|
| 1.9 ± 1.3  |           |
| 8.4 ± 4.1  |           |

Higham et al. (2014) [5] 196 matches Scrums Per team per match

| Per match | Backs: NR |
|------------|-----------|
| 1.9 ± 0.1  |           |
| 8.4 ± 0.6  |           |

Peeters et al. (2019) [60] 32 matches Contact actions

| Tackles/ collisions/ rucks/ mauls | First half: 5.3 ± 2.8 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
|                                 | Second half: 6.3 ± 2.9 |

Reyneke et al. (2018) [67] 15 matches Tackles

| Low (< 21 score): 3.4 ± 1.8 | Backs: NR |
| High (≥ 21 score): 3 ± 2   |           |
| Scrum: 1.6 ± 1.3            |           |
| High (≥ 21 score): 1.2 ± 1.8 |         |
| Ball Carry: 4.4 ± 2.9       |           |
to better prepare players for the collision demands of matches. With that said, only two studies expressed collisions or contact events per minute in sevens [62, 70], which highlights an area for further work. In rugby union match-play, forwards experience more tackles than backs (12.8 (7.5–18.1) tackles and 7.6 (4.3–10.9) tackles, respectively). Another key finding of this review is that forwards experience more very heavy impacts (52.5 (29.8–75.2) vs. 41.7 (26.4–57.0) very heavy impacts) and severe impacts (10.8 (4.4–17.1) vs. 6.7 (5.1–8.4) severe impacts) than backs in rugby union. Coaches are recommended to train players specific to their positional grouping for appropriate adaptations. In both rugby cohorts, only six studies were completed on females [35, 36, 62, 67, 77, 94] and two studies on both sexes [37, 38]. Overall, there was a lack of consistency on the definition of a collision. Also, grouping variables (i.e., how the positions were grouped) made it hard to make comparisons. It is recommended to integrate microtechnology and video-based analysis simultaneously to ensure maximal accuracy of metrics. Given the high injury incidence and burden of collision events, it is important that we adequately prepare athletes for collisions in training to meet the collision demands of matches.

To optimise training, researchers, trainers and sport practitioners typically study competition activities and demands, and attempt to replicate these demands in training [76, 78, 93, 97]. Training is subsequently monitored to ensure athletes meet said competition activities and demands [34]. Monitoring training also ensures athletes are not exposed to any unnecessary injury risks, and are positively adapting to training [34]. Only four studies quantified collision frequencies and/or intensities in training—three in rugby union [32, 80, 90] and one in sevens [47], while 66 studies quantified frequencies and/or intensities of collisions in matches. Three studies related the frequency and intensity of collisions during training to matches—two in rugby union [34, 42] and

| Study: author (year) | Number of matches/training sessions | Type of collisions | Frequency definition | Frequency of collisions: mean ± SD | Relative frequency of collisions: mean ± SD (no. per min) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Ross et al. (2015)  | NR                                  | Tackles:           | High (>21 score)     | 4.9 ± 2.5                         | NR                                                     |
|                     |                                     | Total              |                      |                                   |                                                        |
|                     |                                     | Provincial:        |                      | 0.2 ± 0.1                         |                                                        |
|                     |                                     | International:     |                      | 0.2 ± 0.2                         |                                                        |
|                     |                                     | Rucks:             | Total                | 0.1 ± 0.1                         | 0.2 ± 0.2                                              |
|                     |                                     | Provincial:        |                      |                                   |                                                        |
|                     |                                     | International:     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
|                     |                                     | Ball Carries:      | Total                | 0.3 ± 0.2                         | 0.2 ± 0.2                                              |
|                     |                                     | Provincial:        |                      |                                   |                                                        |
|                     |                                     | International:     |                      |                                   |                                                        |
| Ross et al. (2015)  | 54 matches                           | Tackles:           | Per match            | 2.7 ± 2.6                         | 2.41 ± 2.5                                             |
|                     |                                     | Scrum              |                      | 1.8 ± 1.9                         |                                                        |
|                     |                                     | Ball Carries:      |                      | 3.2 ± 2.4                         | 4.1 ± 3.2                                              |
| Ross et al. (2016)  | 37 matches (between team analysis)   | Tackles:           | Dominant tackles per match: | 2.1 ± 2.3                        | NR                                                    |
|                     |                                     | Ineffective tackles: |                      | 8.1 ± 3.9                         |                                                        |
|                     |                                     | Rucks:             | Defensive ruck average per match: | 1.2 ± 0.3                       | NR                                                    |
|                     |                                     | Ruck average:      |                      | 1.2 ± 0.2                         |                                                        |

NR not reported, RWC Rugby World Cup
Fig. 5 Meta-analysis of studies reporting absolute total scrums, rucks, and tackles per match (n) from video-based analysis in rugby union. The forest plot (mean and 95% confidence interval (CI)) presents the results of the meta-analysis of the pooled data estimates for the total a scrums, b rucks and c tackles per match. The squares and horizontal lines represent individual study mean and 95% CI and the diamond presents the pooled mean and 95% CI. The bigger the square the larger the sample size.
one in sevens [51]. In both studies, collision frequencies and intensities were lower in training, suggesting that players may not be adequately preparing for matches [34, 51]. Indeed, the adaptations for a “collision-fit” player are likely to respond to general training principles including the concept of periodization [98]. Using general training concepts, such as periodisation, and collision demands data from match-play, coaches and practitioners can develop training programmes to enhance players’ adaptability and capacity to repeatedly engage in physical-technical contests without increasing their risk of injury; in other words, building a ‘collision-fit’ player. Recently, this has been suggested for skill training and Hendricks et al. (2018) described such a periodised plan for the rugby tackle [99]. Understanding the adaptations for a “collision-fit” player will also allow for safer return to play protocols for collision sport athletes and reduce the risk of re-injury. To inform collision preparation practice, more work on collision training and its relationship to match demands, player development, performance and/or (re) injury risk is required. Collision training studies of this nature should also ideally be collected over more than one season and from multiple teams.

Collision frequency and intensities have been quantified in studies using video-based analysis (n = 37), microtechnology (n = 24) or both methods (n = 12). Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, video-based analysis is laborious and reliant on human observation, while it may capture more contextual detail of the collision event [16]. Conversely, microtechnology may be more efficient and objective, but its reliability and validity for quantifying collision demands is inconclusive at this stage [16, 24, 25]. Also, customised algorithms detect collisions, making study comparisons difficult [100]. With that said, studies are emerging to support collision metrics when used in conjunction with video-based analysis [23, 25]. Although some literature supports the use of microtechnology for collision monitoring, there is still a lack of validity regarding other metrics and therefore more investigation is needed [23]. As such, a superior approach to quantifying collision demands from a research and practitioner perspective may be to integrate video and microtechnology [18, 19]. Using both video and microtechnology, coaches, practitioners and researchers are able to cross check the microtechnology data with video, determine its accuracy and distinguish between collision events [18, 24, 25].

If the goal is to ensure players are well-prepared for matches by providing the optimal collision frequency and intensity dose, the metrics (i.e., collisions, contacts, scrums, tackles, rucks and mauls) and grouping variables (i.e., specific positions, forwards and backs) between training and matches need to be consistent and more accurate. In other words, how collision demands are reported for matches should be useful to the coach and practitioner, and transferable to a training setting. Therefore, metrics and grouping variables between the two settings need to be consistent to ensure this transfer. Strong engagement with the coach and practitioner when developing reporting metrics is therefore recommended [101]. Recently, a consensus document for the video-based analysis of contact events was published to improve the consistency and quality of video-based analysis work in rugby union and sevens [18]. A similar consensus-based
approach may be required for microtechnology collision metrics [16, 22]. As mentioned, many studies report collisions differently, making study comparisons difficult between groups, methods used and between rugby cohorts. As a result, this limited the current synthesis. Collision intensity metrics in particular were inconsistent between studies. The lack of consistency between studies is a key factor limiting our understanding of collision loads [16]. Additionally, the intensity of collisions is difficult to compare longitudinally, given that technology
Fig. 8 Meta-analysis of studies reporting absolute tackles per match (n) from video-based analysis in rugby union. The forest plot (mean and 95% confidence interval (CI)) presents the results of the meta-analysis of the pooled data estimates for the absolute tackle frequency for a props, b locks, c hooker and d scrumhalf. The squares and horizontal lines represent individual study mean and 95% CI and the diamond presents the pooled mean and 95% CI. The bigger the square the larger the sample size.
is constantly evolving. More recent technology is likely more accurate as algorithms are improved over time ensuring MEMs have a high specificity and sensitivity, and are more likely to detect a collision when it occurs [23], although limited studies can confirm this [25].

The purpose of this review was to synthesise the frequency and intensity of collisions during training and matches in rugby union and sevens. In both rugby cohorts, future studies should investigate training in comparison to match-play. Additionally, future studies should explore women’s rugby. Many of these groups were understudied and are very important in our rugby community. A consensus-based approach for microtechnology is warranted since grouping variables and metrics were inconsistent throughout the studies. Beyond this, there are a number of other factors that can affect how players respond and adapt to different frequencies and intensities of contact. Collision events in rugby union and sevens are dynamic and have a major technical-skill component [102, 103]. The opposing players’ technical ability may also affect the perceived intensity of the collision event. The perceived physical and technical demands of collision events can also be captured using subjective ratings such as rating of perceived exertion (RPE) [104] and rating of perceived challenge (RPC) [98, 104], respectively. These subjective ratings are useful when planning and monitoring training [104]. Also, collisions are interspersed between periods of high intensity running (sprinting, accelerations, decelerations) and low-intensity activities (walking, jogging). As such, advanced collision

![Fig. 9 Meta-analysis of studies reporting absolute tackles, rucks, and scrums per match (n) from video-based analysis in sevens. The forest plot (mean and 95% confidence interval (CI)) presents the results of the meta-analysis of the pooled data estimates for the absolute frequency of a tackles, b rucks and c scrums per match. The squares and horizontal lines represent individual study mean and 95% CI and the diamond presents the pooled mean and 95% CI. The bigger the square the larger the sample size.](image)
training should also include periods of high-intensity running to mimic complete match demands and fatigue conditions [97].

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, this review found a discrepancy in the number of studies quantifying collision demands in training compared to matches. While more work on quantifying the collision demands of training is required, studies should also compare training and matches if we are to improve our understanding of the relationship between training and matches. Another key finding is that the main method for quantifying collisions was video-based analysis. To improve the relationship between matches and training, integrating both video-based analysis and microtechnology is recommended, and the metrics and grouping variables between training and matches should be consistent. Per minute, rugby sevens players perform more tackles and ball carries into contact than rugby union players and forwards experienced more tackles than backs (12.8 (7.5–18.1) tackles and 7.6 (4.3–10.9) tackles, respectively). Another key finding in this review is that forwards experience more very heavy impacts (52.5 (29.8–75.2) vs. 41.7 (26.4–57.0) very heavy impacts) and severe impacts (10.8 (4.4–17.1) vs. 6.7 (5.1–8.4) severe impacts) than backs in rugby union. The frequency and intensity of collisions in training and matches may lead to adaptations for a “collision-fit” player and lend themselves to general training principles such as periodisation for optimum collision adaptation. Subjective measures such as RPE and RPC should be incorporated into the monitoring and management of the collision section of training to understand the internal load.

**Supplementary Information**

The online version contains supplementary material available at https://doi.org/10.1186/s40798-021-00398-4.

| Additional file 1: Table S1. Methodological quality assessment of the final full text articles according to Downs et al. [30]. Table S2. Characteristics of studies using microtechnology to record collisions during match-play or training sessions. Table S3. Characteristics of studies using video-based analysis to record collisions during match-play or training sessions. |

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**Authors’ Contributions**

MN, BJJ, SH and LP conceptualized the idea for the manuscript. LP conducted the systematic search. The full text articles were screened for eligibility by LP and MN. LP and MN completed the quality assessment. LP drafted the manuscript and all authors contributed to the final draft. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Not applicable.

**Consent for Publication**

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**Competing Interests**

Lara Paul, Mitchell Naughton, Ben Jones, Demi Davidow, Amir Patel, Mike Lambert and Sharief Hendricks declare that they have no competing interests relevant to the content of this review.

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