



Process for Rescinding of a Blue Card

Background:

- Referees have been empowered to present a Blue Card (BC) during a match to any player that they feel demonstrates symptoms or signs consistent with being concussed or suspected of being concussed.
- In doing so it is acknowledged that from time to time an incorrect decision might be made and there must be scope for the review and in some cases, for the rescinding of the BC awarded without on-going penalty to the player concerned.
- Consequent to this and reflecting the importance the New Zealand Rugby (NZR) ascribes to the BC process the threshold for rescinding is necessarily set extremely high.
- This threshold includes needing to demonstrate that it was not reasonable for the referee to even suspect possible concussion as having occurred.
- In the case that any doubt exists as to whether a player may have been concussed those persons asked to consider the matter further will necessarily err on the side of caution.
- Data from the use of the BC to date in Provincial Unions (PUs) suggests that the need to consider whether a BC was wrongly issued is very rare.
- It is therefore anticipated that there will be very few occasions that warrant the need to review the awarding of a BC with a view to possible rescinding.

Process

If a player, coach or club believes a BC has been issued in error during a match the following process must be followed:

1. On receipt of the letter to the player from the PU Blue Card Administrator informing them of the procedure to be followed the player concerned should discuss the episode with relevant club officials having had regard to the community rugby guidelines for the Graduated Return to Play following concussion.
2. If they still believe that the BC has been given incorrectly the player and his club should seek information from the following sources and prepare it for sending to New Zealand Rugby:
 - Team Management account
 - Referee account
 - Video footage (if available)
 - Any other reports or information that may be felt to be of value
3. This information should be sent via the PU Blue Card Administrator to the NZR Medical Director (ian.murphy@nzrugby.co.nz) who will consider this information and whether there

are sufficient grounds for a further independent assessment to be undertaken. **This information must reach NZR within 48 hours of being issued.**

The following outcomes may occur:

- a. If NZR do not feel there is merit in a further assessment, the Medical Director will communicate this to the PU Blue Card Administrator and the BC ruling will stand.
 - b. If NZR do feel there is merit in a further assessment, the Medical Director will communicate this to the PU Blue Card Administrator together with a direction to an appropriate specialist to review the player.
4. Following independent assessment:
- a. If the independent specialist does not believe that the player has been concussed at the time of the awarding of the BC then it may be rescinded by NZR upon receipt of confirmation from the specialist indicating as much.
 - b. If the independent specialist does believe there are sufficient grounds for the player to be considered concussed (or suspected of being concussed) then the BC will stand.

A report from the independent specialist will communicate their decision to New Zealand Rugby.

5. The decision of the NZR assessment and/ or an independent specialist will be communicated to the relevant PU Blue Card Administrator via the NZR Medical Director.

Further Notes:

A recommendation of an independent specialist for the rescinding of a BC should not be construed as indicating the BC was incorrectly awarded in the first place. There are many circumstances where the awarding of the BC might be correctly applied during the match but on later review reversed.

There is no appeal process within New Zealand Rugby to review the outcome of this decision.

Any costs associated with the further assessment of a BC will be at the expense of the player or their club.

Time - in many cases this procedure will take some time to occur and may not occur any quicker than the mandatory stand-down period in the Community Concussion Guidelines.

Ian Murphy

NZR Medical Director