



## LETTER OF NOTIFICATION TO LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

10/3/17

GP clinics/ A&E clinics

Dear Drs,

### **Blue Card Concussion Procedure in Community Rugby**

The Bay of Plenty Rugby Union (BOPRU) takes player welfare extremely seriously. In 2017 the BOPRU is initiating a procedure to ensure players that sustain a concussion receive sufficient medical treatment before returning to rugby. The BOPRU realises that for this procedure to be credible, the support of all health care providers across Bay of Plenty is vital.

The procedure will be implemented from the 18/3/17 to all senior /premier grades and to any junior or school game where the referee has received the appropriate Blue Card training..

### **Concussion Management Procedure**

A player is shown a Blue Card if, during the course of a match, a referee identifies they have suffered a blow and consequently show indications to suggest that they may be suffering from concussion. The issuing of a Blue Card triggers a formal off-field follow up procedure.

After the match the referee will inform the PU person responsible for the Blue Card procedure that such an incident has occurred.

Pat Rae the referee manager at BOPRU will draft a letter to the club and player concerned confirming that the player has been stood down from playing rugby because of concussion or suspected concussion. This letter will provide detail of the process by which they can ultimately return to play.

The essential elements of the graduated Return to Play (GRTP) process are that a player must:

- Have no on-going symptoms; and
- Have completed the minimum rest period from playing; and
- Have undertaken a graduated return to play protocol; and
- Have been cleared by a doctor to return to play.

If it is suspected that a Blue card has been incorrectly issued, the player will need to be referred to an independent BOP Rugby doctor for review which will cost the club/player.

### **Medical practitioner involvement**

It is strongly recommended that the suspected concussed player seeks medical attention within 24 hours of the injurious event to be assessed and provided with initial advice. It is recommended that the doctor perform a SCAT3 test on the first visit to achieve an initial post injury score. This document can be obtained here -<http://bjsm.bmj.com/content/47/5/259.full.pdf> or by searching for SCAT3 online.

***It is mandatory that no doctor overrule a concussed player allowing them to return to play before 3 weeks as they have been witnessed to show signs of concussion on the field.***

**High Performance Centre, 52 Miro Street, Mount Maunganui**

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Having completed a graduated return to play process as outlined in the guideline, a player must obtain medical clearance to resume playing. It is recommended that a SCAT3 test is completed during the clearance visit. It may be possible to compare to a prior SCAT3 result if this was done at the time of the event occurring.

The player is required to have their doctor complete a form to indicate that they have been cleared and provide this to the Provincial Union representative.

A player must produce a clearance letter to be signed by the medical practitioner then return to the BOPRU to be permitted to resume playing. The player will have been provided with a specific form for this purpose. This must be received by the BOPRU office 24 hours before scheduled return to play.

The player is then cleared to return to play.

### **Payments for consultations**

Players will require an assessment by a medical practitioner, after they have been Blue Carded to be cleared to return to play. Players are able to obtain reimbursement of the ACC surcharges associated with this visit by submitting the receipt to their Provincial Union.

### **Notes:**

The card removes any doubt as to whether the player should be removed on the suspicion of a concussion being present. There can be no opportunity for the player to return to the field on that same day if he/ she "recovers".

This procedure does not set aside the need for the mandatory stand-down period as outlined in the NZR protocols.

The procedure outlined has been developed by New Zealand Rugby (NZR) who have applied a comprehensive set of protocols for implementation of this initiative in the community game. A copy of these protocols is enclosed.

Thank you for your support as we look to improve the care of concussion in the community game.

Kind regards



Pat Rae BOPRU referee manager  
Dr Jethro Le Roy GP liaison BoP DHB

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