

NORTHLAND RUGBY

2026 Northland Rugby Competition's Code of Conduct



Code of Conduct 2026

**Northland Rugby Union - 09 438 4743 - 136 Riverside Drive, Whangarei - PO Box 584,
Whangarei**

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Introduction

The Northland Rugby Union (NRU) has a proud history of fostering rugby talent and a commitment to grassroots rugby throughout all of Northland.

Our strategic obligation is in improving communities through rugby focused initiatives.

Rugby must be played within the spirit in which it was intended. We have a collaborative responsibility for ensuring that this happens - it involves team management, players, match officials, volunteers and spectators.

This document was created to provide a framework for clubs to ensure every person involved with the game has an enjoyable and safe experience.

Club/Team/Referee Declaration

I have read and understand this document (please tick)

The(Grade)(Club/School) agrees to, support, enforce and abide by the NRU Code of Conduct during all rugby fixtures.

By signing this document, the club acknowledges that all team members have been made aware of the document and what is included. The Club also acknowledges intent to display for club members.

Signed:.....

Print Name:

Position: Club Chairperson

Date:

Northland Rugby CODE OF CONDUCT 2026**Print Team:****Name and Position:****Date:****Signed:**.....**Print Team:****Name and Position:****Date:****Signed:**.....**Print Team:****Name and Position:****Date:****Signed:**.....**Print Team:****Name and Position:****Date:****Signed:**.....**Print Team:****Name and Position:****Date:****Signed:**.....**Code of Conduct 2026****Northland Rugby Union - 09 438 4743 - 136 Riverside Drive, Whangarei - PO Box 584, Whangarei**

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Print Team:

Name and Position:

Date:

Signed:.....

Print Team:

Name and Position:

Date:

Signed:.....

Print Team:

Name and Position:

Date:

Signed:.....

Print Team:

Name and Position:

Date:

Signed:.....

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MATCH DAY PROTOCOL FOR HOSTING CLUBS

Fixture definition

Host responsibility of the rugby fixture begins 1.5 hours before the first rugby game at the venue and concludes at the closing of the clubrooms. It is recommended where practical, that the hosting club (if they are providing food) , will endeavor to serve this within an hour from the conclusion of the match. This will support a safe environment if alcohol is being consumed at the club.

Essential components for a rugby fixture to occur:

Field Setup

Host clubs will ensure that fields are adequately roped off. Ropes are to be a *minimum* of 3 meters from each touchline and run the length of the playing area, including a roped area for coaches & reserves behind the dead ball line (refer to field setup options in appendix 1) (Application to be positioned at halfway can be made to the Northland Rugby Union Community Rugby and Operations Manager prior to the season commencing)

- **Ensure post pads are fitted, field flags are in position and ground markings are adequate.**

Event Managers

Each team (club) playing, shall be responsible for appointing an Event Manager(s) for all rugby matches. Event Managers needs to be a person that holds respect within the club environment. The match will NOT COMMENCE until both Event Managers are in place and have identified themselves to the referee and are wearing Hi-Viz apparel. The NRU will support the NRRRA and the Referee who will have sole authority in this instance. If these persons are unavailable, the Managers of the participating teams automatically become the event managers.

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The Event Managers will ensure:

**Visiting teams and match officials are welcomed and their needs met.
(Including access to changing/shower facilities.)**

All grounds have barriers/safety ropes/safety padding in place.

All teams (including management) behavior complies with NRU code of conduct

Ensure only authorized persons that are permitted inside the ropes:

o Referee, Assistant Referee's & Touch Judges

o One Medical Assistant

o Ball Kids

·Any sideline abuse of referees, or unruly behavior is immediately addressed, and offenders appropriately dealt with.

· No alcohol is being consumed within the playing enclosure (within 5 metres of the field outer markings).

**The Referee has the ability to call off the fixture if
any of the above points are not met to an
acceptable standard**

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REFEREE ABUSE AND SPECTATOR BEHAVIOR

Any incident of referee abuse, disorderly behavior or alcohol consumption by spectators or team members within the playing enclosure, is to be addressed in the first instance by the appointed Event Manager(s). If required, the Event Manager(s) are to seek the assistance and gain support of other club officials and/or the match referee to ensure the enforcement of sanctions provided to any offending parties are complied with. If any of the above incidents occur during a match, including Referee Abuse or general disorderly behavior of spectators, The Event Manager should adopt the following process:

- **Approach the offending parties to identify them. Request the offending parties to cease from behavior concerned. Indicate to them that if they do not comply they WILL be asked to leave the playing enclosure.**
- **If they fail to comply, call for assistance of other club officials and the match referee who shall stop the match to support the appropriate sanction. The offender should be asked to leave the complex.**
- **If non-compliance continues, the referee may call the match off.**
- **If a referee is physically abused, the NRU will automatically withdraw referee services for all teams of the offending club. It will then be the club's responsibility to meet with the NRU to satisfy them (and the NRRRA) that the issues have been resolved. Competition points will be allocated to the opposition until such time as referee services are reinstated.**
- **If a referee is verbally abused the NRU will automatically withdraw referee services for the offending team. It will then be the club's responsibility to meet with the NRU to satisfy them (and NRRRA) that the issues have been resolved. Competition points will be allocated to the opposition until such time as referee services are reinstated.**

NOTE: It is recommended that neither the Event Manager, assistants nor the Match Referee confront any offending parties physically.

All incidents must be reported to the Northland Rugby Union via an NRU Match Incident Report (Appendix 3)

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Abuse Definitions (not just inclusive to Referees)

Abuse is defined as to attack with coarse or insulting, rude, threatening or maligning language or behavior.

<p>Verbal Abuse is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any form of foul language • Any form of threatening language • Continual complaining/sledging • Personal insults • Dissent by players • Any insults or personal attacks published in all forms of media including all social media in or on a club affiliated domain. 	<p>Physical Abuse is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushing • Bumping • Spitting • Kicking • Punching • Any form of attempt of the above • Any form of threatening behavior • Throwing of objects
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REPORTING OF AN INCIDENT

Match Interruption

- **If an incident occurs at a venue, the referee must communicate with the event manager immediately. If no suitable resolution can be found, or the incident needs further redress, an NRU incident form must be completed within 48 hours of the fixture.**

Both the Event Manager and the Match Referee (if called upon to assist) shall forward a NRU Match Incident Report to the NRU Designated Disciplinary Officer (DDO) within 48hrs of the match ending, detailing a summary of the incident(s) and information leading to the identification of the offending party concerned.

- **If the referee has to either *Stop* or *Call Off* a game the referee and Event Manager are to complete an NRU Match Incident Report and have forwarded to the NRU DDO within 48 hours of the match ending.**
- **If any fixture is called off prior to completion due to behavioural issues, the offending club/clubs may be required to attend an NRU Judicial for possible sanction and the allocation of the competition points. Refer to the Competition Rules.**

Other Citing

- **Any complaints or citing's regarding foul play/violence/Referee abuse or other such act during an NRU sanctioned fixture that has gone undetected by match officials, must be made in writing (NRU Match Incident Report) to the NRU DDO within 48 hours of completion of the fixture. Further evidence may be added prior to a hearing.**
- **The complaint shall be directed to the NRU Designated Disciplinary Officer (DDO) (representing the NRU CEO) who will either deal with the complaint under the NRU Code of Conduct or submit it to the NRU**

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Whangarei

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Complaints Review Officer. If the Complaints Review Officer determines that there are grounds for the complaint, the matter will be passed to the NRU Judicial Officer to convene a hearing. See Appendix 2 for the NRU Incident Complaints Procedure.

Referees Protocol

- **Referees are to adhere to the match day protocol and report any breaches to the NRU, via the NRU Match Incident Report. The referee is not permitted to waive the procedures contained in this policy. If they do so they accept responsibility as the match official for the consequences that occur and realise, they could have taken measures to rectify the situation.**

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Individual Responsibility

Definitions

- **Individual - Affiliated Member of organisation/club or a person/s that has entered the vicinity of an event related to rugby.**
- **Rugby Event -**
 - **Rugby Training**
 - **Rugby Muster**
 - **Pre-Game (Teams are assembling/warm up)**
 - **During the game (Including ½ time and stoppages)**
 - **Post Game (pre-after match, aftermath, until the venue closes)**

Expectations

- **Every individual (defined above) is bound by the Northland Rugby Code of Conduct within the confines of a rugby event**
- **Expectations are that individuals will protect the integrity of the host venue. This includes**
 - **Respect of property**
 - **Respect of other individuals**
 - **Respect of Match Officials**
 - **Respect of Athletes**
 - **Respect of the Club Licence (or On-Licence)**
- **Alcohol consumption is prohibited at Junior Rugby Fixtures (Under 18/1st XV down) except for what clubs decide in relation to their Liquor Licence**

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CODE OF CONDUCT BREACHES

BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT WILL RESULT IN AN NRU ENQUIRY. THE NRU RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CARRY OUT THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS ONCE THE ENQUIRY IS COMPLETE:

- **If a breach of the Code of Conduct is found to be minor, a letter of Code of Conduct non-compliance will be sent to the club and spoken to by the NRU to ensure future compliance.**

- **If a breach of the Code of Conduct is found to be more than minor and/or is coupled with repeated breaches of any part of the code of conduct, whether minor or not, it shall be dealt with as follows:**
 - **the offending team may have their next scheduled home game re-allocated to the opposition club**
 - **the offending team may have the remainder of their home games re-allocated to the opposition club**
 - **the offending teams' Coach and/or Manager may be given warning**
 - **the offending teams' Coach and/or Manager may be given stand down of 1 or more games and the club required to replace**
 - **The offending team may be removed from the current years competition**
 - **any other such penalties the NRU sees fit to take as recommendation to the COU, and as approved by the COU**

- **If any individual feels a breach of the code of conduct has occurred, an incident report should be lodged with the Northland Rugby Designated Disciplinary Officer (DDO) within 48 hours of the breach.**

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Concussion/Blue Card

Player welfare is a priority for New Zealand Rugby (NZR) . As such, NZR has established protocols to ensure optimal recovery and longevity in rugby and life for community players who have a suspected concussion.

A suspected concussion occurs when a player:

- **experiences an event that has the possibility of causing a concussion;**
- **presents with acute or delayed signs or symptoms that may be indicative of a concussion: Signs and Symptoms | NZ Rugby;**
- **may or may not have been removed from play or training; and/or**
- **consults a medical doctor for a concussion assessment.**

The minimum stand-down period for a suspected concussion is 21 days for ALL players applies when:

- **a player is diagnosed with a concussion by a medical doctor.**
- **a player who meets the definition of suspected concussion but is diagnosed as not concussed by a medical doctor.**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Graduated return to play timeline for players 19 years and above						Day 0 DOI
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
	Medical Diagnosis					
Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19 Contact Training	Day 20 24 hrs (no symptoms)	Day 21 Return to play
	Medical Clearance					

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Graduated return to play timeline for players under 19 years.						Day 0 DOI
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
	Medical Diagnosis					
Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20	Day 21 Contact Training
	Medical Clearance					
Day 22 24 hrs (no symptoms)	Day 23 Return to play					

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GRADUATED RETURN TO PLAY

REHABILITATION STAGE	EXERCISE AT EACH REHABILITATION STAGE	MINIMUM TIME PER STAGE
1. Relative rest	Activities of daily living and reduced screen time	Days 1–2
2. Light to moderate exercise*	Symptom-guided low to moderate intensity activity such as walking, or jogging.	Days 3–16 Min. of 24 hours between stages before progressing.
3. Individual sport-specific exercise*	Increase intensity. Running, change of direction, individual skills with NO risk of head impact.	Symptoms should be progressively improving. If symptoms worsen drop back a stage.
4. Non-contact training drills*	Progression to more complex multiplayer training drills: passing, catching, may start weight training	Days 17–18
5. SEEK MEDICAL CLEARANCE		
6. Following medical clearance full contact practice	May participate in normal training activities (contact training)	Day 18–20
7. After 24 hours return to play	Player rehabilitated	Day 21

**If symptoms persist, seek medical advice*

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The NRU has also added a concussion form for players who are not Blue carded to be sent in by Coaches/Managers or NRU staff member.

(eg: Concussed at training, at a game but not referee reported or during a game without an NRRR referee)

**This form can be filled out digitally from NRU website or via this link
[Form \(hsforms.com\)](#)**

Injury reporting:

All injuries requiring medical attention (IE Hospital or Doctor) must be reported via the serious injury report form on the NRU website or via this digital link

<https://share.hsforms.com/1S3dlxt5oRp2Gp-zLhmr9ywdkw8a>

**Serious Injuries that require an ambulance must be reported immediately to Brooke Foster 0272857526 or brooke.f@northlandrugby.co.nz
By doing this we can get extra assistance if required.**

Judicial Process

Red Card process:

Red card is reported by the referee to the Designated Disciplinary Officer (DDO) within 48 hours of the game.

Once discussed with the Northland Rugby Referees Association Judicial representative, this will be sent to the NRU Complaints Review Officer (CRO)

They will either:

- **Refer on to the NRU Judiciary Officer (JO)**
- or**
- **Sent back to DDO as an automatic two week stand down**

For a Judicial hearing, the DDO will notify the Referee, Offending player's Team manager and Offending player a time and date of the hearing – this will be run via Microsoft teams online video conference.

Appeal process:

Should a player request an appeal this must be done within seven days of receipt of the official judiciary report, in writing to the Designated Disciplinary Officer accompanied by the required payment of \$200 as per section 15 of the 2024 Northland Rugby Competition Rules.

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Reciprocal Visiting Rights Arrangement: Northland Rugby Union (NRU) and Affiliated Clubs (Clubs)

Reciprocal Visiting Rights Arrangement

This document recognises and records the reciprocal visiting rights arrangement between clubs. Clubs have mutually observed this arrangement while they have held club licences under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 and preceding legislation and continue to do so.

Members of clubs (authorised visitors) have been and continue to be, entitled to visit other clubs (hosts) on the same terms and conditions as Members of Hosts are entitled to be present at the Host's premises, until such time as this arrangement is rescinded.

By signing this agreement, clubs acknowledge that authorised visitors abide by the rules and policies of Hosts while visiting Hosts' facilities, including those relating to the consumption of alcohol.

Club Name.....

Name of Signatory.....

Signature..... Office Held

Signed on behalf of Northland Rugby Union

Paul Lennane

Chief Executive Officer

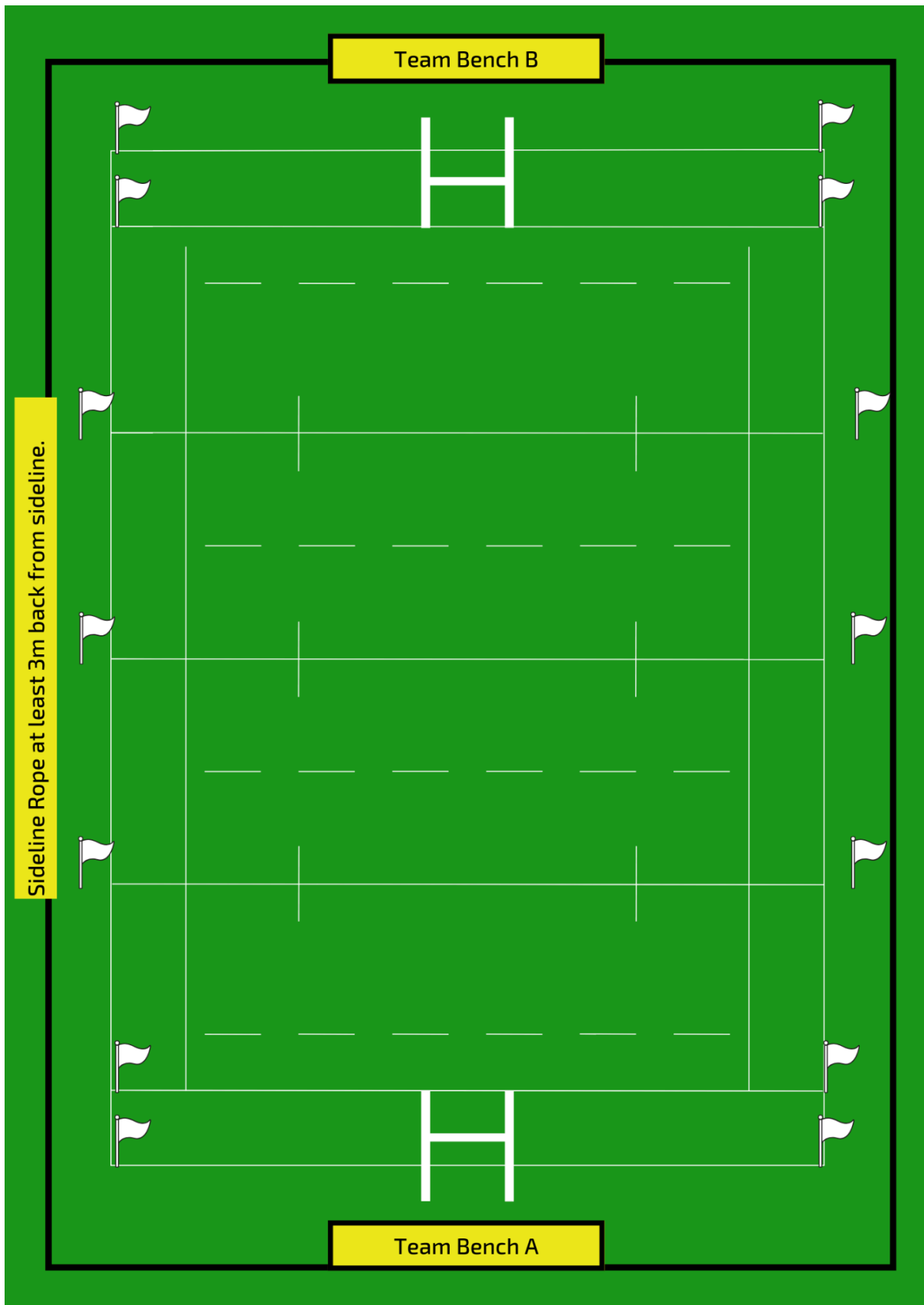
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Appendix One: Acceptable Field Set Up



Northland Rugby CODE OF CONDUCT 2026**Field Dimensions:****Length: - 94-100m****Width: 68-70m****In Goal: 6-22m****Sideline to 5m: 5m minimum****5m-15m: 10m minimum****Tryline to 22m - 22m Minimum****Halfway to 10m - 10m Minimum****10m-22m - 15-18m****Sideline to Spectator barrier - Minimum 3m****Sideline to flags at 22m, 50m - 1m****Player Bench - 3m Deep and 2m away from
sideline**

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Appendix Two: Incident Complaint Procedure

On receiving an incident report the NRU Designated Disciplinary Officer (DDO) will determine how to proceed with the complaint. There will be two ways to proceed:

- **Deal with the incident under the NRU Code of Conduct/Rules (Refer to Sanctions List)**
- **Refer the incident to the NRU Complaints Review officer.**

Escalation by Complaints Review Officer:

An NRU Judicial Officer shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine a complaint of illegal and/or Foul Play against a Player (“a Complaint”) in respect of any act of illegal and/or Foul Play which has not been detected by the Match Officials in a Match for which the Union has jurisdiction. The complaint must be lodged with the DDO within 48 hours of the completion of the match.

1. A Complaint under Rule 19 may be made by:

- i. The CEO of NZR or their nominee;**
- ii. The CEO of the Union or their nominee or Citing Commissioner (where appointed by the Union);**
- iii. The Secretary of a Club involved in the Match;**
- iv. The Union’s Referee Association; and**
- v. All other persons.**

2. A Complaint under Rule 19 shall contain the following information:

- i. The date and place of the alleged illegal and/or Foul Play;**
- ii. The name of the Player in respect of whom the Complaint is made (and their jersey number) and the team they were playing for at the time of the alleged illegal and/or Foul Play;**

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- iii. **The name of the opposing team; and**
 - iv. **Full details of the alleged illegal and/or Foul Play.**

- 3. (1) On receipt of a Complaint (other than a Complaint brought with leave under Rule 21**
(2), the CEO of the Union or appointed person/s shall immediately refer the Complaint to the Union Complaints Review Officer.

- 4. (1) On receipt of a Complaint brought with leave under Rule 21**
(2), the CEO of the Union shall proceed as required by Rule 24(4) as if notification had been received from the Union Complaints Review Officer that the Complaint should proceed to a hearing before the Judicial Officer or Judicial Committee.

Appendix 3

NORTHLAND RUGBY UNION INCIDENT REPORT

Details of the Incident:					
Referees Name:					
Date of Incident:					
Fixture:					
Grade:					
Venue:					
Nature of Incident (Please circle)	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Verbal</i>	<i>Referee Abuse</i>	<i>Code of Conduct</i>	<i>Other</i>
Person(s) Responsible for Incident (Please circle)	<i>Player</i>	<i>Coach</i>	<i>Club Official</i>	<i>Spectator</i>	<i>Other</i>
Name(s) of person(s) responsible for abuse (if known)					
Club/team of person(s) responsible for abuse: (if known)					

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List names and club/team of any witnesses to the incident:	
Describe details of the incident:	
Your Details:	
Signature:	
Date:	
Name:	
Phone:	