

Dear Players

### **Mouthguards - PLEASE READ**

In 2018, NZR will be taking a different approach to the requirement for players to wear mouthguards during games and contact trainings. This follows recent discussion with the New Zealand Rugby Players' Association Board.

We have become increasingly concerned about those players who are not wearing mouthguards. Our concerns are:

- **Players not wearing mouthguards are far more susceptible to sustaining serious dental injuries.** These injuries, when they occur, can have significant dental health consequences.
- **The Collective Agreement, our competition rules and New Zealand's health and safety laws all require players to wear mouthguards.**
- **NZR is reviewed every year by ACC for compliance with health and safety rules.** Player safety is a critical part of NZR remaining accredited by ACC to manage our players' injury treatment and rehab.
- **Players not wearing mouthguards can cause injury and illness to other players.** An example of this occurred during the Mitre 10 Cup in 2017, resulting in misconduct and a fine for the player who caused the injury.
- **Most importantly, professional rugby players need to set an example for young players participating at the community level of the game.**

In the future, NZR's approach where dental injuries are suffered by players who are not wearing mouthguards is likely to be that it only pays the portion of the treatment costs that would be met by ACC, with all other costs not met by ACC being passed onto the player.

We are also likely to take a misconduct action when it is brought to our attention that a player has not worn a mouthguard. Where that is proven, options for sanction will likely be a fine or a 1 week suspension from playing. The only potential exception to the rules would be where a player has a medical certificate exempting them from wearing a mouthguard on medical grounds.

#### **What to do if you do not currently wear a Mouthguard?**

- Discuss with your team management, and explore options for thinner, less intrusive mouthguards if necessary
- Prepare to use a mouthguard in games by beginning to use in pre-season training