



23 March 2021

FOUL PLAY REVIEW COMMITTEE NEWS RELEASE

Foul Play Review Committee: Adam Casselden SC (Chairman), Mike Mika and Stefan Terblanche

Team: Blues

Position: Hooker

Date of Incident: 21 March 2021

Nature of Offence: Law 9 18: a player must not lift an opponent off the ground and drop or drive that player so that their head and/or upper body make contact with the ground.

Elapsed time in match when incident occurred: 67:20

SANZAAR NEWS RELEASE

Kurt Eklund suspended for 3 weeks

The SANZAAR Foul Play Review Committee has accepted a guilty plea from Kurt Eklund of the Blues for contravening Law 9.18, after he was Cited during a Super Rugby Aotearoa Match at the Weekend.

Eklund has been suspended from all forms of the game for 3 weeks, up to and including 16 April 2021.

The incident occurred in the 67th minute of the match between the Blues and Crusaders at Eden Park in Auckland on 21 March 2021.

The SANZAAR Foul Play Review Committee of Adam Casselden SC (Chairman), Stefan Terblanche and Mike Mika assessed the case.

In his finding, Foul Play Review Committee Chairman Adam Casselden SC ruled the following:

"Having conducted a detailed review of all the available evidence, including all camera angles and additional evidence, including submissions from his legal representative, Aaron Lloyd, the Foul Play Review Committee upheld the Citing under Law 9.18.

With respect to sanction, the Foul Play Review Committee deemed the act of foul play merited a mid-range entry point of 6 weeks due to the World Rugby instructions that dictate any incident of foul play involving contact with the head must start at a mid-range level. However, taking into account mitigating factors including the fact the Player has pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity, the Foul Play Review Committee reduced the suspension to 3 weeks. The Player was entitled to a full 50% reduction due to no prior offences on his record.

This means a sanction of 3 weeks. This includes the following fixtures:

- Super Rugby Aotearoa Round 5 Chiefs v Blues 27 March 2021

- Super Rugby Aotearoa Round 6 Blues v Hurricanes 3 April 2021
- Super Rugby Aotearoa Round 7 – Bye –
- Super Rugby Aotearoa Round 8 Highlanders v Blues 16 April 2021

The Blues have a scheduled bye in Round 7 which does not count as a week for sanctioning purposes. The player would therefore be suspended from all forms of the game up to and including 16 April 2021.”

All SANZAAR disciplinary matters are in the first instance referred to the Foul Play Review Committee to provide the option of expediting the judicial process.

For a matter to be dispensed with at this hearing, the person appearing must plead guilty and accept the penalty offered by the Foul Play Review Committee.

ENDS