

IRB Appeals Citing

Written by Alex Goff
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The IRB is appealing a citing decision.

Rugby's international governing body is appealing the one-week suspension handed down by Independent Judicial Officer Jean Noel Couraud on New Zealand player Adam Thomson.

Thomson was cited for stamping on the head of an opponent during the November 11 game between the All Blacks and Scotland.

The IRB has tried to be consistent with its criteria and punishments in foul play citings, and has publicly taken a dim view of the use of the boot on opponents, especially to the head.

The IRB feels one week is not long enough, and said in a statement released Wednesday:

As custodians of Rugby worldwide, the IRB has a duty to protect its image, values and integrity together with the welfare of players at all levels in order that the sport can continue its unprecedented growth and welcome more men, women and children to the Rugby family.

At the very heart of this mission is the universal application of the disciplinary process as set out in Regulation 17. This IRB Disciplinary regulation is intended to protect all players and the Game through the strict application of a sanctioning regime that acts as a strong deterrent against acts of foul play.

This stance was reaffirmed by leading international players, coaches, referees and administrators attending the IRB Morality Conference in London in March this year who unanimously agreed that a tough and consistent stance on discipline is key to Rugby's integrity.

After careful consideration and having reviewed the full written decision in the Thomson case well within the permitted 72 hours of receipt, the IRB strongly believes that the sanction of one week is unduly lenient for this particular act of foul play and not aligned with the sanctions handed down in similar cases.

The IRB firmly believes it is in the best interests of the Game and its integrity to exercise its ability to appeal the Thomson decision. The right of appeal by the IRB (in defined

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circumstances) and for Host Unions and tournament organisers was introduced into the revised Regulation 17 effective on June 1 this year to uphold the integrity of the disciplinary process in appropriate cases.