

Supplements Promotions - Guidance for Super Rugby Clubs and Provincial Unions

Background

New Zealand Rugby (NZR) and the New Zealand Rugby Players Association (RPA) have concerns about the promotion of supplements. The purpose of this document is to highlight these concerns and provide high-level guidance in this area. Our preferred approach is to provide guidance and advice rather than further regulation in this area.

Position statement

NZR and the RPA support a ‘food first’ approach to nutrition. This means that players should ensure they consume a varied, nutrient rich and complete diet based largely around whole natural foods filled with carbohydrates, protein, quality fats and micronutrients.

The joint NZR and RPA position is that supplements are unnecessary and unduly risky for young players outside of a professional environment.

Sponsorship

Prior to entering into an agreement with a supplement manufacturer, distributor or provider, your Club or PU DSM must complete and send a copy of the Sponsorship Template to the NZR Integrity Manager. This is a requirement of the Supplements Regulations. At this time NZR will provide more specific advice about other key considerations such as termination rights if the provider suffers reputational damage, batch testing records and requirements, as well as guidance on promotion and endorsement.

We accept that from a commercial perspective you will want to be able to offer product endorsement by players to these companies in order to maximise revenue available from the deal, however we do not believe that this is in the best interests of the players, the team’s reputation, or ultimately the customer who is being induced to purchase products that may not be in their best interests.

We strongly recommend that you manage the expectations of your sponsor/ provider at the time of negotiating any agreement.

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Guidance

- Promotion / endorsement of supplements should be restricted to the brand (e.g. BSc, USN, MusclePharm), rather than individual products
- Player IP should not be used to promote individual products

There is an inherent risk that product/s could be subject of seriously adverse publicity in the event of positive test (anywhere in the world). While the products used by the teams are batch tested, products bought outside high performance environments may not necessarily be tested.

NZR and the RPA also have concerns about the extent to which player endorsement promotes supplement use to young aspiring players - even if the marketing is not directly aimed at young aspiring players.

If your Club/ PU chooses to allow supplement sponsors/ providers to use IP in relation to particular products, we strongly recommend that products promoted are limited to products supplied to and used by the Club/ PU. If a Club/PU does choose to use Player IP in accordance with this Guidance, then the Club/PU must notify and consult with the RPA.