

## World Rugby U20 Championship 2015

### Judicial Officer's Hearing Report

The hearing took place at the Tournament Office, Brescia, Italy on 4 June 2015.

The Judicial Officer appointed to hear the matter was H. Pat Barriscale of Ireland (JO).

#### **In attendance:**

Archie Russell (Scotland #13) – The Player

David Edge - Manager Scotland U20

Sean Lineen - Head Coach Scotland U20

Yvonne Nolan - Tournament Disciplinary Officer

Joyce Hayes - Judicial Administrator World Rugby

The hearing was convened by the Disciplinary Officer pursuant to the Tournament Disciplinary Programme ("TDP") contained in the World Rugby U20 Championship 2015 Terms of Participation and followed a citing brought by Mr Maurizio Vancini of Italy, the Independent Citing Commissioner appointed to the match. The Citing Report alleged that the Player committed an act of foul play contrary to Law 10.4(j) in a match between New Zealand and Scotland played at Parma Stadium on 2 June 2015.

#### **Introduction**

The Player confirmed that he had received all the appropriate documents and video clip and no preliminary issues were raised. The JO outlined the procedures to be adopted in that he would firstly consider whether the incident warranted a red card and if so satisfied would proceed to sanction. If not so satisfied that would be the end of the hearing.

The Player was asked whether he accepted that he had committed an act of foul play and stated that he did not and wished to contest the citing complaint.

#### **Hearing**

The video clips were shown a number of times both at normal speed and in slow motion. The Player and his representatives suggested that NZ 13 jumped into the tackle as the Player was tackling low. As a result NZ 13's momentum took him up into the air at shoulder height. They suggested the Player did his best to bring him down to the ground safely. The JO suggested it appeared to him that the Player dropped him from shoulder level. They responded that the Player himself lost his balance in his tackle and stumbled sideways. There was no intent on the part of the Player to injure his opponent. The other player was bigger, taller and heavier than the Player and the impact happened in such a way that the Player didn't expect. The Player apologised after the tackle but said the natural reaction was to fall away. As there were no further submissions the JO considered the matter in private.

### **Decision on Offence**

The offence cited was under 10.4(j) which states that “*lifting a player from the ground and dropping or driving that player into the ground whilst that player’s feet are still off the ground such that the player’s head and/or upper body come into contact with the ground is dangerous play*”.

The JO said he was satisfied that there was no intent to injure the other player but the onus was on the tackling player to ensure the safety of the tackled player. He had not done enough in this regard and was therefore guilty of the offence as cited and that it warranted a red card. The JO upheld the citing and proceeded to sanction.

### **Sanction**

The JO asked those present to address him regarding entry point, aggravating and mitigating circumstances under clause 11.10 of the Tournament Disciplinary Programme. On behalf of the Player it was suggested low end was appropriate. In mitigation he had an exemplary record both for his club and country, had apologised to the other player, had conducted himself appropriately at the hearing and had shown remorse. Ms Nolan emphasised the memorandum of 2009 in respect of Dangerous Tackles and asked that this be an aggravating factor to deter such pattern of offending. There being nothing further the JO considered sanction in private.

### **Decision on Sanction**

The JO said he felt low end entry point was appropriate at four weeks. He noted the 2009 memorandum but did not increase sanction in these circumstances to take account of it. The player was entitled to maximum mitigation of two weeks and reduced sanction to two weeks. This equates to two matches in this Tournament so the Player is suspended from all rugby until midnight on 10 June 2015.

### **Appeal**

The Player was reminded of his right to appeal within 48 hours of receipt of the full written decision.

5 June 2015

H. Pat Barriscale  
Judicial Officer