

Oral Decision of the Judicial Panel as to the Red Carding of John Quill Of the USA (“the Player”)

1. The Player, at the earliest opportunity, admitted the correctness of the Red Card and the offence for which he was ordered off. He was frank and fully cooperative with the Panel.

2. As to sanction, the Panel found that this was mid-range offending, involving, as it did, forceful contact with the head of an opponent.

3. The Panel were persuaded that this was not deliberate offending, but was reckless, having regard to:

(A) the Player’s credible account as to his expectation that the English player was going to pass the ball on and was not expecting that the opponent would run on, carrying the ball, in his direction. The Panel was persuaded, on the balance of probabilities, that the pivoting of the Player’s body to his right, with the unfortunate promotion of his left shoulder which made contact with the opponent’s right jaw, was a reactive, and defensive, response by the Player to an unexpected situation.

(B) The opponent accepted that the impact on him was “not as forceful as the (video) footage appears to suggest”.

(C) The opponent was not concussed or otherwise injured. (There was medical evidence confirming this; and also as to a cut or abrasion to the opponent’s nose, which was apparent on the video clips, but which related to an earlier, quite different, incident).

4. The entry point for sanction for such mid-range offending is a 6 weeks suspension. The Panel found no aggravating factors; but found mitigation in terms of the early admissions by the Player, his contrition (expressed to his opponent on the field at the end of the match) and his good character, demeanour and candour.

5. Accordingly, the Player is suspended from all rugby up to and including 13 October 2019, which means that he will miss the USA’s next 3 RWC pool matches (against France on 2 October 2019, Argentina on 9 October 2019, and Tonga on 13 October 2019).

(By Regulation 17.19.11(c) the Player may not play the Game (or any form thereof) or be involved in any on-field activities anywhere until this suspension has expired).

Nigel Hampton QC
Chair of Panel
27 September 2019