



DECISION FORM (FIRST INSTANCE)

| PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|
| Player's Name | EVGENII KARONNOV | | |
| Player's Union | Russian Union | | |
| Match | Netherlands v Russia | | |
| Competition | Rugby Europe Under 18 Championship | | |
| Date of match | 9/10/2021 | | |
| Match Venue | Kalingrad Stadium | | |
| Rules to apply | Rugby Europe Disciplinary Regulations 2020 Edition and Regulation 17 World Rugby Handbook Appendix 2 (adjusted sanction table for underage rugby) | | |
| Referee Name | | Plea | <input type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not admitted |
| Offence | 9.12 Physical abuse (punching or striking with hand or arm) | <input type="checkbox"/> Red card <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citing <input type="checkbox"/> Other If "Other" selected, please specify: | |

| HEARING DETAILS | | | |
|--|---|------------------|---|
| Hearing date | 12 th October 2021 at 1800 CET | Hearing venue | Video Conference Microsoft Teams |
| Chairperson/JO | Antony Davies (England) | | |
| Other Members of the Disciplinary Panel | Palemia Field (Finland) Matthew Weaver (England) | | |
| Appearance Player | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Appearance Union | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Player's Representative(s) | Rugby Union of Russia : Pavel Federov (CEO) Ilya Tiron (Age Grade Rugby Development Manager) Sergey Markov (Sports Director) Yulia Vorona (General Secretary and Player's Translator) | Other attendees | Martin Picton (observing) |
| List of documents / materials provided to Player in advance of hearing | 1. Citing Commissioner's Report 2. Video clip – match footage 3. Still photograph – point of impact – provided by Citing Commissioner 4. Notice of Disciplinary Hearing 5. Player's Disciplinary Record | | |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Player’s Playing Schedule 7. Rugby Europe Disciplinary Regulations Edition 2020 8. World Rugby Regulation 17. Appendix 3. |
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SUMMARY OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CITING/REFEREE’S REPORT/INCIDENT FOOTAGE

Richard McGhee was the Citing Commissioner appointed to the match. He reported as follows.

“The Referee awards a penalty to Netherlands for a technical infringement. Russia 24 takes the ball away from the contact area and puts it down for the NL scrum half to retrieve. The NL scrum half pushes the Russian player in the act of retrieving the ball and is in turn pushed by Russia 10 who is then grabbed by NL 12 and a tussle begins. This triggers a bout of pushing, pulling and grappling amongst a group of players. Russia 8 runs from approximately 10 metres away to get involved and attempts to drag an NL player who is involved in the fracas out by the neck. NL 7 in turn grabs Russia 8 by the shirt collar and drags him away. Russia 8 reacts by punching NL 7 in the face and knocking him to the ground. NL 5 strikes out at Russia 8 with an open hand, but the contact is minimal. Russia 8 then confronts other NL players before being pulled away by his team mates. A number of players were guilty of poor conduct in this incident, but the worst action was that of Russia 8, who is cited for violent conduct and a punch to NL 7.

I discussed the incident with the Referee, who advised he was looking at the other side of the melee at the time (there was a lot going on) and did not see the specific incident referred to.”

The Citing Commissioner supplied a still photograph entitled “point of contact”. This is blurred and grainy but shows Russia 8 standing upright with his right arm extended in front of him. At the end of his right arm is the head of NL 7 and there appears to be contact between the two. The contact appears to be to the face (left cheek) of NL 7 and his head is tilted towards his right shoulder.

We viewed the match footage. It depicted exactly what the Citing Commissioner described. It is an ugly and unnecessary melee, involving most of the players from both sides. The unedifying spectacle involves a lot of posturing, pushing and pulling, but the only discernible strikes are those by the Player and NL 5 referred to in the Citing Commissioner’s report.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF OTHER EVIDENCE (e.g. medical reports)

SUMMARY OF PLAYER’S EVIDENCE

The Player said that he had been upset by what was depicted in the match footage and the Citing Commissioner’s words in the citing report. He accepted that from the angle shown it looked like he had struck the opponent. However, he had only pushed the opponent away when he was trying to separate the players. He said he had pushed him hard on the shoulder this caused him to stumble.

In response to questions from the Panel, he said he had got involved to separate players to try and bring the melee to an end. He accepted that he dragged a Netherlands' player by the neck. He felt NL 7 stumbled to ground because of the strength of his push. He was far bigger and stronger. When asked why his team mates needed to physically restrain him and pull him away, he said that the emotion of the situation got the better of him. It was his first game for Russia and he struggled to control his emotions. He accepted that he looked angry and upset. He apologised for the incident, which he accepted did not look good, but maintained that he had not struck with his fist, but had pushed NL 7 away with his hand making contact with the shoulder.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Based on all the above we found:-

1. The Player appeared to have lost control when he ran 10 metres to join a melee that was nothing to do with him. He then acted aggressively by pulling an opponent out by the neck. He had to be restrained and dragged away by several of his team mates.
2. When NL 7 took hold of the Player's shirt, he reacted aggressively by striking with his right arm.
3. The point of contact between his hand and NL 7 was to the left side/cheek of NL 7, causing him to stumble over.
4. It was a forceful strike.
5. We were not satisfied on the evidence that it was a strike with a clenched fist, but it was nonetheless a strike which made contact with NL 7's head.
6. The strike was with such force, and to the head, that it was a clear act of foul play and one which warranted a red card.
7. There was no injury to NL 7.

DECISION

Proven Not proven Other disposal (please state)

SANCTIONING PROCESS

| ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS | | |
|---|--|---|
| As per Article 4.5 of Rugby Europe Disciplinary Regulations and Regulations 17 of World Rugby | | |
| Assessment of Intent | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intentional/deliberate <input type="checkbox"/> Reckless | | |
| State Reasons | | |
| | | |
| Gravity of player's actions | | |
| A strike to the head with the hand, making a forceful contact, with clear potential for serious injury. The Player had got himself involved unnecessarily and in doing so he was not in control of his emotions | | |
| Nature of actions | | |
| One strike to the head with the hand. | | |
| Existence of provocation | | |
| NL 7 had grabbed the Player by the shirt collar. | | |
| Whether player retaliated | | |
| The Player retaliated to the actions of NL 7 in grabbing his shirt collar. | | |
| Self-defence | | |
| N/A | | |
| Effect on victim | | |
| None | | |
| Effect on match | | |
| None | | |
| Vulnerability of victim | | |
| NL 7 initiated the contact with the Player, though he would not have expected to be struck as up to that point, the melee was characterised only by pushing and shoving. | | |
| Level of participation/premeditation | | |
| Full | | |
| Conduct completed/attempted | | |
| Completed | | |
| Other features of player's conduct | | |
| As the Citing Commissioner observed, a number of players were guilty of poor conduct in this incident, but the Player's actions were the worst in that he struck with force whilst not in control of himself. | | |
| Entry point | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Top end [XX] Weeks | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mid-range 4 matches | <input type="checkbox"/> Low-end [XX] Weeks |
| *If Top End, the JO or Panel should identify, if appropriate, an entry point between the Top End and the maximum sanction and provide the reasons for selecting this entry point, below. | | |
| Reasons for selecting Entry Point above Top End | | |
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| ADDITIONAL RELEVANT OFF-FIELD AGGRAVATING FACTORS |
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| As per Article 4.5 of Rugby Europe Disciplinary Regulations and Regulations 17 of World Rugby |
| No such status found. |

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| Need for deterrence |
| N/A |
| Any other off-field aggravating factors |
| None found |

Number of additional weeks: Nil

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| Summary of reason for number of weeks added: |
| N/A |

| RELEVANT OFF-FIELD MITIGATING FACTORS | |
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| As per Article 4.5 of Rugby Europe Disciplinary Regulations and Regulations 17 of World Rugby | |
| Acknowledgement of guilt and timing | Player's disciplinary record/good character |
| The Player gets some, but not full, credit for his acceptance that he was out of control and struck the opponent. He maintained that it was not a punch and that it made contact with the shoulder. The Panel found that whilst the evidence of a punch was not clear, the contact with NL 7's face was. | The Player has a good disciplinary record and has not previously received a red card or been cited. His Coaches described the incident as out of character for him. |
| Youth and inexperience of player | Conduct prior to and at hearing |
| The Player has been playing for 11 years in youth rugby. From 2018 he has been playing representative rugby, both at 7's and 15's, with some success. He is regarded by his Coaches as having a bright future and is in the running for selection for the Russian National Under 20 Team. He plays a lot of rugby but is still only 18. | The Player's engagement with the process during the hearing was excellent. His approach was measured and showed a mature insight into the offending and its consequences and was committed to work with his Coaches to keep his emotions in control in the future. |
| Remorse and timing of remorse | Other off-field mitigation |
| In both his opening and closing words to the Panel, he apologised genuinely and sincerely for the incident. He had been upset by what the video depicted and the Citing Commissioner's description of it. He comes from a passionate rugby family and is seen as a role model. He felt he had let his family and others down. He had shaken hands with his opponent after the game and apologised. He felt they had left on good terms. | During the Player's free time from training and playing, he assists in the development of young players at a sports school. |

Number of weeks deducted: **One**


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| Summary of reason for number of weeks deducted: |
| Remorse, conduct, good disciplinary record, but only a partial acknowledgment of guilt. |

SANCTION

NOTE: Players ordered off or cited by a citing commissioner are provisionally suspended pending the hearing of their case, such suspension should be taken into consideration when sanctioning – RE Discipline Regulations 4.1.4 / 4.4 (or equivalent Tournament rule)

| | | |
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| Total sanction | Three matches | <input type="checkbox"/> Sending off sufficient |
| Sanction commences | 10/10/21 | |
| Sanction concludes | 26/10/21 (midnight) | |
| Matches/tournaments included in sanction | 22-24 October 2021 Russian 7's Championship Taganrog 25-26 October 2021 Under 19's Russian XV Championship Sochi. The Player will miss the first two scheduled games of this Championship. He will be eligible to play in games 3, 4 and 5. | |

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| Costs | None awarded |
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| Date | 13/10/2021 |
| Signature (JO or Chairman) | Antony Davies  |

NOTE: You have 48 hours from notification of the decision of the chairman/jo to lodge an appeal with the tournament director – RE Discipline Regulations 4.6.2 (or equivalent Tournament rule)