

DISCIPLINARY DECISION



Match	Italy vs. England. Women's 6 Nations		
Player's Union	RFU	Competition	Women 6 Nations
Date of Match	24/3/2024	Match venue	Stadio Sergio Lanfranchi
Applicable rules	2024 SIX NATIONS DISCIPLINARY AND ANTI-DOPING RULES		

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE

Player's Surname	Beckett	Player's Forename(s)	Sarah
Player's Date of birth	14/2/1999	Referee's Name	Aurelie Groizeleau
Foul play	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input type="checkbox"/> Not admitted	Red card warranted	<input type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not admitted
Offence	Law 9.20. d) "A player may lever the Jackler out of the contest at the ruck but must not drop their weight onto them or target the lower limbs."	SELECT: Red card <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citing <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If "Other" selected, please specify:	
Summary of sanction	3 weeks		

HEARING DETAILS

Hearing date	26/3/2024	Hearing venue	Zoom call
Chairman/JO	Juan Pablo Spirandelli (Argentina)		
Other members of Disciplinary Committee	Jamie Corsi (Wales) Bogdan Zebega (Romania)		
Appearance Player	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Appearance Player's union	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Player's representative(s)	John Shea (Representative) Angus Hetherington (Legal Counsel RFU) Harriet Martin (England Women's Team Operations Manager)	Disciplinary Officer and/or other attendees	Tom Price (SNRL) Max Duthie (SNRL) Julie Paterson (SNRL) Annie Quantrill (SNRL)
List of documents/materials provided to Player in advance of hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMO Review clips – red card incident; • Broadcast clip – red card incident; • Video footage Referee delivers Bunker decision. • Red card reports from FPRO, TMO and Referee • Clarification of law infringements provided by Match Officials • Player statement from Michela Sillari, Italy no.13; • Medic statement from Dr Ilaria Sparta, Italy Team Doctor; • Orthopaedic Clinic report and CT report (translated into English) and e-mail from Italian Team Manager. • Disciplinary Rules. 		

SUMMARY OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CITING/REFEREE'S REPORT/INCIDENT FOOTAGE

FPRO report: states that at 10'36 min. of 1st half, ENG 8 *made a dangerous cleanout at a tackle situation and dopped on lower limbs of her opponent.* Referring to the nature of the offence it was considered the action breaches Law 9.11 (a player must not do anything that is dangerous or reckless) and 9.20 (d) (a player must not drop his/her weight on opponent or target lower limbs).

In the e-mail of 25/3/24 he declares that if only one law must be ticked, it'll be kept law 9.20.

Referee Red Card Report and TMO clarification: The referee report states that there was a *dangerous cleanout, collapsing on the lower limbs* breaching Law 9.20.(a). TMO's email of 24/3/2024 inform the Law infringed "*should be 9.20.d*" declaring that his report to de FPRO was "*Eng 8 collapsing on the lower limbs of the jackler. The FPRO came back with high degree of danger and no mitigation.*"

The **match footage** reproduced gave a clear view of the incident, from the back and from the side, which took place following a tackle made over ENG 4, ITA 13 intends to jackle the ball and at that moment ENG 8 tries to make a cleanout bounding the jackler around her torso, and collapsing over her lower right limb.

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

Statement of Italian Player Michela Sillari: The victim player declared that she was "*supporting a player at the tackle and while I was trying to take the ball the English player N° 8 pushed me away by doing the twist and unloading her weight on my knee which turned.*"

Italian Team Doctor statement: The medical report says that Michela Sillari "*suffered a sprained and bruised knee injury following which she suffered a fracture of the tibial plateau. The MRI showed the fracture of the tibial plateau.*"

The Radiologist Dr. Francesco Negri report: Inform that at de CT control, "*a "deformity" is confirmed with significant depression up to at least 8mm) in the mid-anterior planes of the upper profile of the lateral tibial plateau secondary to the structural partial collapse in the outcomes of the fracture of the same lateral tibial plateau. The fracture line also involves the auricular cartilage plane of the lateral tibial plateau at the intermediate levels as the level of the load-bearing area.*"

E- mail of the 26/3/2024 from Italian Team Manager Inform that Michela is having surgery and the surgeon said she will be back in the field after 5 months if all goes well.

SUMMARY OF PLAYER'S EVIDENCE

Standing directions response:

- a. *Sarah Beckett was the player who was shown the red card;*
- b. *At this stage, I confirm that no preliminary matters will be argued;*
- c. *It is accepted that the Official Reports are a true and accurate account of the incident that resulted in the showing of the red card and the facts surrounding the incident save that it is not accepted that the incident warranted the showing of a red card;*
- d. *It is accepted that Sarah committed an act of Foul Play as set out in the Official Report(s);*
- e. *It is not accepted that Sarah's actions warranted a red card;*
- f. *It will be argued that the decision to show Sarah a red card was wrong;*
- g. *It will be argued that the act of foul play was not sufficiently serious to justify the red card offence and that there were mitigating factors present. Sarah will be attending tomorrow's hearing in order to give evidence*

The player submissions:

In her submission, Ms Beckett allege that she came into a ruck to clear the jackler that was standing with her head low so not trying to make contact to the head she bound her from her torso and try to push her backwards. That ITA 13 moved to the left and therefore she lost balance and collapsed. That she had no intention to make a croc roll.

The player's representative submissions:

The representative plead that the match officials had not taken into account that ENG 8 had intent to make a legitim cleanout and never had the intention to land over ITA 13 lower limbs or target the lower limbs.

He accepted that foul play was committed for staying Ms Beckett bounded to the jackler for a few seconds after collapsing. But, as state in the responses to standing directions, he considered that the incident was not sufficiently serious to justify a red card offence and that there were several mitigating factors:

- a) That there was a change in ITA 13 position, moving to the left, and that causes ENG 8 lost balance and collapsed over the lower limb of the Italian player. That Ms Beckett never attempted to make a "croc roll" at first instance. She just attempts to bind the player and push it backwards, and that falling onto Italian player lower limb was a non-expected consequence of losing balance.
- b) That there was a secondary impact of another England player and was determinant to make Ms Beckett impact ITA 13 on her lower limb.
- c) That the Italian player leg was not in a vulnerable position.
- d) That ENG 8 stayed bound because she was not aware that she will collapse on the lower limb as she never saw it.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. **Had foul play occurred?**

Yes. The player's representative had admitted that Ms Beckett committed foul play by staying bound to ITA 13 after collapsing and that offence breaches the law 9.20 (d). But in the criteria of this DC, not just for this.

Law 9.20.(d) states that *"A player may lever the Jackler out of the contest at the ruck but must not drop their weight onto them or target the lower limbs."*

The footage of the incident shows that ENG 8, intending to clean out the jackler, bind round to her torso and collapsed over her right lower limb.

The player declared that she collapsed over ITA13 due to a slight change of position of the player, but, as it was admitted by her representative, and conclude this DC, that change or moving left was after and a consequence of ENG 8 contact, dropping over the jackler.

It was not an intentional but a reckless action as the player, breaching law 9.20.(d), dropped her weight over the jackler and stay bound pulling her to the side.

The footage (TMO Review clips -side view-) confirms this assert as the player at the instant of making contact with the jackler has her legs extended, in an almost horizontal position, and that's why she loses balance when ITA 13 moves, and collapses over her lower limb. She couldn't n support her weight in that position.



2. **Did the incident merit a red card?**

Was the incident sufficiently serious to warranted a red card?

First of all, it has to be remarked that pursuant regulation 2.5.19 *"If the Player does not accept that he/she should have been shown a red card, the burden will be on the Player to prove, on the balance of probabilities, that the referee's decision to show him/her a red card (including where that was the result of consultation with one or both assistant referees, the Television Match Official and /or the Foul Play Review Officer) was wrong."*

The TMO declared that his report to the referee which triggered the formal review and the FPRO review was ENG 8 collapsing on the lower limbs of the jackler, and that the FPRO came back with high degree of danger and no mitigation.

There is not too much guidance to determine the seriousness of the offence as in the HCP, but this can be taken as a reference.

As seen, the referee, the TMO and the FPRO agreed, following that guidance, that the action of collapsing over the jackler lower limb was of high degree of danger and that no mitigation apply.

Law 9.20.(d) specifically protect the jackler who is assumed to be in a vulnerable position. So, there is always a potential risk in the act of dropping the weight on to them. In the dynamic of the incident, the way the player dropped with force over ITA 13 and pull it to the side, making a significant torsion of her body, carries a **high degree of danger**.

Contrary to what the players representative plead, **for this DC there are no mitigating factors that apply**.

The circumstance alleged by the player and her representative, that ITA13 moves and that's why ENG 8 loose balance can't be taken as one, as that slight movement was caused by her own action, in the instant of making contact with ITA13's back.

Neither the alleged secondary impact. The footage in this case shows that the torsion and the contact with ITA13 lower right limb was clearly previous to the second impact, so it cannot be considered as a mitigating factor.



On this understanding, the DC conclude that the player had not proved, in the balance of probabilities, that the match official decision was wrong and consequently, the red card will be sustained.

DECISION

Foul play	Admitted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determined <input type="checkbox"/> Not determined <input type="checkbox"/> Other disposal (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>
Red card warranted	Admitted <input type="checkbox"/> Determined <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not determined <input type="checkbox"/> Other disposal (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>

SANCTIONING PROCESS

References below are to provisions in the 2024 Disciplinary and Anti Doping Rules, which form Schedule Four of the 2024 Six Nations Terms of Participation documentation.

ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS

Assessment of intent – clause 2.5.89 (a) and (b)	
Intentional <input type="checkbox"/>	Reckless <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
State reasons	
The player should have known that in the way she faced the clean out, dropping her weight with force over the jackler, was a risk of committing an act of foul play.	
Nature of actions – clause 2.5.89 (c)	
The player dropped her weight with force onto the jackler and made a torsion on jackler’s body.	
Existence of provocation – clause 2.5.89 (d)	
No	
Whether Player retaliated – clause 2.5.89 (e)	
No	
Self-defence – clause 2.5.89 (f)	
No	
Effect on victim – clause 2.5.89 (g)	
The victim suffered a sprained and bruised knee injury following which she suffered a fracture of the tibial plateau. The MRI showed the fracture of the tibial plateau. CT control shows a “deformity” with significant depression up to at least 8mm) in the mid-anterior planes of the upper profile of the lateral tibial plateau secondary to the structural partial collapse in the outcomes of the fracture of the same lateral tibial plateau. The fracture line also involves the auricular cartilage plane of the lateral tibial plateau at the intermediate levels as the level of the load-bearing area. The player will be under surgery and It could take around 5 months to go back to the field as informed by the team manager.	
Effect on match – clause 2.5.89 (h)	
None, apart from the replacement of ITA 13	
Vulnerability of victim – clause 2.5.89 (i)	
As the victim was jackling the ball she was in a quite vulnerable position to prevent the ENG 8 action.	
Level of participation/premeditation – clause 2.5.89 (j)	
The Player participated fully in the foul play. The DC accepted that he had not planned to do so	
Conduct completed/attempted – clause 2.5.89 (k)	
The conduct was completed	
Other features of Player’s conduct – clause 2.5.89 (l)	
Not applicable	

ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS CONTINUED

Entry point					
<u>Top end*</u>	<u>Weeks/matches</u>	<u>Mid-range</u>	<u>Weeks/matches</u>	<u>Lower end</u>	<u>Weeks/matches</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	

*If top end, the JO or Disciplinary Committee must identify, based on his/her/its assessment of the seriousness of the conduct, an entry point between the top end and the maximum sanction and provide the reasons for selecting this entry point, below (see clause 2.5.90).

Reasons for selecting entry point above top end

RELEVANT OFF-FIELD MITIGATING FACTORS

Acknowledgement of foul play (and timing) – clause 2.5.91(a)	Player’s disciplinary record – clause 2.5.91 (b)
The player acknowledge that commit foul play at first occasion, but not accept the offence warranted a red card.	The Player has only one precedent on her disciplinary record for another infringement (high tackle) more than 2 years ago, having played at international level for 6 years.
Youth and/or inexperience of Player – clause 2.5.91 (c)	Conduct prior to and at hearing – clause 2.5.91 (d)
The player is only 25 y.o. Starts playing for England U20 in 2018, and that same year for the main team	The player was respectful before and during the hearing
Remorse (and timing if remorse) – clause 2.5.91 (e)	Other off-field mitigation – clause 2.5.91 (f)
The player showed remorse by seeking out Michela Sillari immediately to apologies on the field, and texting her after de match.	N/A

Number of weeks/matches deducted: 3

Summary of reason for number of weeks/matches deducted:
 Albeit the player challenged the red card, she admitted committing foul play at the first moment, and she might reasonably think that her action was no sufficiently serious to warranted a RC. She shows remorse on the field and after, was respectful at the hearing and despite of her youth she has a relative long international career in the national team with only one precedent, more than 2 years ago, in 6 years.

RELEVANT OFF-FIELD AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Player’s status as an offender of the Laws of the Game – clause 2.5.94 (a)
N/A

Need for deterrence – clause 2.5.94 (b)
N/A
Any other off-field aggravating factors – clause 2.5.94 (c)
N/A

Number of additional weeks/matches:

SANCTION

NOTE: PLAYERS ORDERED OFF OR CITED ARE PROVISIONALLY SUSPENDED PENDING THE HEARING OF THEIR CASE, SUCH SUSPENSION SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN SANCTIONING – CLAUSES 2.5.14 AND 2.5.33.

Total sanction	3 weeks	Sending off sufficient <input type="checkbox"/>
Sanction commences	27/3/2024	
Sanction concludes	21/4/2024	
Matches/tournaments included in sanction	England vs. Wales (W6N 30/3/2024) England vs. Scotland (W6N 13/4/2024) England vs. Ireland (W6N 20/4/2024)	

Costs	none
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Signature (JO or Chairman)	Juan Pablo Spirandelli	Date	27/3/2024
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NOTE: THE PLAYER WILL HAVE UNTIL 4PM (GMT) ON THE THIRD DAY (EXCLUDING WEEKENDS) AFTER RECEIPT OF THE WRITTEN NOTICE OF THE DECISION OF THE CHAIRMAN/JO TO FILE AN APPEAL WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DISCIPLINARY PANEL C/O THE DISCIPLINARY OFFICER – CLAUSE 2.6.4. APPEAL TO BE EMAILED TO disciplinary@sixnationsrugby.com.