

DISCIPLINARY DECISION



Match	Scotland v England		
Player's Union	Rugby Football Union	Competition	Six Nations
Date of Match	13 April 2024	Match venue	Hive Stadium, Edinburgh
Applicable rules	2024 Six Nations Disciplinary and Anti-Doping Rules ("the 6 Nations Rules")		

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE			
Player's Surname	Cokayne	Player's Forename(s)	Amy
Player's Date of birth		Referee's Name	Clara Munarini
Foul play	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input type="checkbox"/> Not admitted	Red card warranted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input type="checkbox"/> Not admitted
Offence	<p>9.18: A player must not lift an opponent off the ground and drop or drive that player so that their head and/or upper body make contact with the ground</p> <p>9.13: A player must not tackle an opponent early, late or dangerously. Dangerous tackling includes . . . tackling or attempting to tackle an opponent above the line of the shoulders</p>	<p>SELECT: Red card <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citing <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If "Other" selected, please specify:</p> <p>Player received two temporary suspensions (yellow cards) in the Match</p>	
Summary of sanction	1 week		

HEARING DETAILS			
Hearing date	16 April 2024	Hearing venue	Zoom call
Chairman/JO	Rhian Williams (Wales)		
Other members of Disciplinary Committee	Donal Courtney (former international referee – Ireland) Val Toma (former international referee – 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)	Angus Hetherington, Senior Legal Counsel, RFU Harriet Martin, England Women's Team Manager	Disciplinary Officer and/or other attendees	Tom Price, Acting Head of Policy and Integrity, 6 Nations; Annie Quantrill, 6 Nations
List of documents/materials provided to Player in advance of hearing	<p><u>First Yellow Card</u> Referee's report – Clara Muniari ("Referee") TMO's report – Matteo Liperini ("TMO")</p> <p><u>Second Yellow Card</u> Referee's report TMO's report Foul Play Review Officer's ("FPRO") report – Ben Whitehouse</p>		

	<p>Statement from Scotland Team Doctor, Victoria Campbell</p> <p>Written submissions on behalf of the Player from Mr Hetherington together with her responses to the Standard Directions</p> <p>Video footage of both incidents</p>
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SUMMARY OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF REFEREE’S REPORT/INCIDENT FOOTAGE

1st Yellow Card – Law 9.18

The Referee’s report stated:

“England number 2, 5 metres away from the try line, at a ruck, lifted a Scotland player, taking her above the horizontal line, resulting in foul play.”

The TMO’s report said:

“During a ruck the England players numbers 2 and 4 made a dangerous cleanout on the Scotland player number 8. The England number 2 lifted the leg of the Scotland player who fell to the ground in a non-dangerous way.”

The video footage showed England in possession of the ball, attacking close to the Scottish line underneath the posts. The ball was moved left and taken into contact by E1. The Player (E2), following closely behind, entered the ruck in an attempt to ‘clean out’ S8 who was attempting to steal the ball. In doing so, the Player’s left arm was under the left shoulder of S8 with her right arm around the thigh of S8’s left leg. The consequence of the Player’s actions was to tip S8 upside down. From that position, S8 managed to cushion her fall to the ground by reaching out with both hands. The dynamic of S8’s fall to ground was also alleviated by the fact that E4 was holding her, suspended in the air, so that the force with which she reached the ground was reduced.

2nd Yellow Card – Law 9.13

The Referee’s report stated:

“England number 2 tackled Scotland number 2, being upright, leading to a direct head to head contact, that resulted on a yellow card (sic). England number 2 had already received a yellow card which lead to a red card being issued.

After the bunker TMO review, this second yellow card remained as a yellow card.”

The TMO’s report said:

“During the open play England player no 2 made a dangerous tackle on the Scotland player no 2. During the tackle there was a clear contact with the head (shoulder on the head) and the England player no 2 was in upright position.”

The FPRO's report said:

"On reviewing the footage of the review, I saw E2 in an upright position – entering a tackle situation. I felt she entered the tackle as an assist tackler in an attempt to strip the ball from the opposition - which she was successful in doing.

However in doing so she made head contact with her shoulder. I believed the contact to the head was illegal, however I didn't believe the contact to have a level of danger was high. (sic)

So I that I deemed sticking with a YC was the correct decision due to the degree of danger not being high."

The video footage showed Scotland deep in their half attempting to run the ball out of defence. The Scottish ball carrier was confronted by the Player who executed a tackle apparently with the aim of 'stripping' the ball from her opponent. The stripping of the ball was successful but in the action of tackling her opponent with that intention, the Player's right shoulder made contact with the neck and / or head of S2. This was the action the Referee considered a foul worthy of issuing a yellow card.

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

The report received from Victoria Campbell, Scotland's Team Doctor, stated:

"With regards to the two players, neither were seriously injured thankfully. However, from mechanism of tackle they were at risk of serious injury- Evie Gallagher [S8] commented she had to put her hands out to protect her head and Lana Skeldon [S2] luckily had no issues on assessment."

SUMMARY OF PLAYER'S EVIDENCE

Mr Hetherington had sent submissions on behalf of the Player in advance of the hearing. These submissions are set out in the Annex.

DECISION

World Rugby does not prescribe specific sanctions for accumulated temporary suspensions. The matter is left to the discretion of judicial committees although guidance is provided in Appendix 4 to Regulation 17 which is reproduced in Appendix 3 of the 6 Nations Rules.

From Mr Hetherington's written submissions, if the Player were to be entitled to full mitigation, the final sanction would be one week whether the entry point was two weeks or one week. The Committee agreed with Mr Hetherington that in the circumstances the Player would be entitled to

full mitigation of 50% but determined that the cumulative effect of the two acts of foul play should lead them to conclude that the correct entry point to reflect the seriousness of the offending was two weeks.

In the light of the above, the Chair asked the Player if she accepted the above determinations or whether she wished to have the opportunity of examining in detail all of the evidence available to the hearing. Both the Player and her team manager, with the concurrence of her Counsel, agreed with the Committee's decision that an entry point of two weeks resulting in a suspension of one week was the appropriate outcome.

The Committee therefore confirmed its decision as above.

The Committee's view was that, although classified as offending under two different Laws, both acts of foul play were poorly executed attempts to tackle (with potentially serious consequences) and the second offence occurred but a short time after the Player's return to the field of play after the first temporary suspension.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determined <input type="checkbox"/> Not determined <input type="checkbox"/> Other disposal (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>

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.

Entry point (2 YCs)	2 weeks	Sending off sufficient <input type="checkbox"/>
Mitigation (50%)	1 week	
Total sanction	1 week	
Sanction commences	13 April 2024	
Sanction concludes	20 April 2024	
Matches/tournaments included in sanction	England v Ireland – 20 April 2024	

Costs	N/A
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Signature (JO or Chairman)		Date	17 April 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.