# *RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION*

## *DISCIPLINARY HEARING – MONDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2008*

## *HOLIDAY INN, COVENTRY M6, JUNCTION 2*

## ***JUDGEMENT***

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| **Player:** | **Daniel HODGE** |
| **Club:** | **COVENTRY RFC** |
| **Match:** | **MOSELEY v COVENTRY** |
| **Venue:** | Moseley |
| **Date of match:** | 9th February 2008 |
| **Panel:** | Richard MOON, Andrew LOCKHART and Geoff PAYNE |
| Secretary: | Bruce REECE-RUSSEL |
| In attendance: | the player<br>Steven Priest – Coventry RFC |

## CHARGE AND PLEA

The Player, Daniel Hodge, Coventry RFC admitted that he had struck an opponent in the Moseley v Coventry match on the 9th February 2008, contrary to Law 10(4)(a).

## FACTS

The match referee, Ashley Rowden in his report described the incident as:

"In the 23rd minute of the second half, a ruck had taken place 10 metres infield and 35 metres from the Moseley try line. As the ball came away from the ruck the Moseley No 12 (Trueman) was seen to throw punches at a Coventry player on the ground. At this point the Coventry No 7 (Hodge) who was involved in the initial ruck, was seen to throw a number of punches in retaliation".

The player, whilst admitting the offence, had written a statement to aid the Panel. In it he stated "Midway through the second half I was clearing a ruck out and a Moseley player was wrestling with me and fell on top of me with him holding on to m y left hand and bit me very hard on the middle finger. I shouted out "He's biting me". His front teeth went through my finger nail and I bled profusely. I did manage to get my finger out of his mouth and our physiotherapist……..

When questioned by the Panel he did admit striking an opponent after the biting incident had taken place but this was in retaliation. It is of note that Coventry RFC have not cited in this particular case.

The player made the point that whilst he and Gary Trueman (Moseley) had been sent off in the same incident they were two separate parts and did not involve each other.

The player had apologised to the referee after the game.

## FINDING

The Panel having assessed the gravity of the offence under 8.2.5 of the RFU Disciplinary Regulations made the following assessment:

- The offending was intentional.
- There was provocation in so much as he was bitten
- No injury received.
- The act was completed.

The Panel assessed the entry point as Low Entry (LE) with an entry point of 2 weeks. They then took into account:

- His guilty plea and remorse.
- His apology to the referee and other parties after the game.
- Clean disciplinary record
- His remorse.

In regard to these mitigating features the Panel discounted 1 week.

## SANCTION

The player is suspended from playing for a period of 1 week. The suspension will run from the 18th to the 24th February 2008 allowing him to play again on the 25th February 2008.

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## COSTS

Costs of £200.00 were awarded against the Player/Club.

## RIGHT OF APPEAL

There is a right of appeal against the decision and this should be lodged with the RFU Disciplinary Department within fourteen days of receipt of this written Judgement.

Signed …pp Richard Moon (Chairman)

Dated: 21st February 2008