

**RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION**

**DISCIPLINARY HEARING**

**At:** Holiday Inn, Swindon

**On:** 9 October 2008

**JUDGMENT.**

**Player:** Tim Collier                      **Club:** Launceston RFC

**Charge:** Three yellow cards

**Panel:** Christopher Quinlan (Chairman) John Doubleday & Paul  
Murphy

**Secretary:** Bruce Reece-Russel (RFU Disciplinary Manager)

**Charge and Plea**

1. By post, in a letter dated 8 October 2008 Tim Collier ('the Player') pleaded guilty to receiving three yellow cards during the current 2008-2009 season. In the said letter Jim O'Hara Team Manager, Launceston RFC ('the Club') indicated that the Player wished the case to be heard in his absence and on the papers.

**The Facts**

2. The Panel considered the caution reports for each yellow card. The first during the match played between the Club and Southend RFC on 6 September 2008 was for a stamp contrary to law 10(4)(b). He received the yellow card for stamping twice on the torso of an opposing player.
3. The second yellow card was issued again for a stamping offence during the Club's home match against Tynedale RFC played on 27 September.
4. The third and most serious yellow card was issued for an offence of what is described in the caution report as dissent. A little of the circumstances is necessary. It was issued in the second half of the Club's home game against Redruth RFC played on 4 October. On a number of occasions during the first half the Player questioned the referee's decisions. Just prior to half time he 'questioned' the referee's 'consistency' (as the referee puts it in the caution report). The referee spoke to the Player's captain. The Player responded by saying to the

referee, 'that's ridiculous just get on with refereeing the game'. That was rude and wholly unnecessary; the referee penalised him and again spoke to his captain, warning him that any further dissent would result in a yellow card.

5. The Player was not put off. Five minutes into the second half the referee awarded Redruth a penalty. Redruth elected to kick for goal. As the Launceston players lined up the Player was heard to shout, 'don't worry lads the refs been paid off'. He was then shown a yellow card.

### Sanction

6. In his letter to us dated 7 October the Player 'apologised unreservedly' to the referee for his behaviour. He was frustrated, which frustration he said he 'took out on the referee'. His Club suspended him for one week and fined him £100. We took that into account, as we did the content of Mr O'Hara's letter of 8 October.
7. Any one of us who has played sport will have experienced decisions with which we disagreed, sometimes profoundly. What distinguishes rugby union from other sports (to its continuing credit) is that the participants (in the main) respect the decisions makers. It is important that that high level of respect remains. Those charged with the task of administering discipline will continue to ensure match officials are afforded the respect they deserve.
8. This Panel takes a very serious view of a comment which questions the integrity of a referee. We have to consider the sanction entry point as required by RFU Regulation 8.2.5 and as provided in Appendix 2 to the said Regulations. In light of nature of the most serious offence, match official abuse, we take the view that this case justifies a top end entry point, namely the lower end of range for the most serious offence. The lower end entry point for verbal abuse of a match official is 6 weeks.
9. We consider there to be no aggravating factors within the meaning of Regulation 8.2.7.
10. We give the Player full credit for his admission and the matters set out in his and Mr O'Hara's letters. That we equate to a period of three weeks. **Accordingly we conclude that the appropriate sanction is the imposition of a period of suspension from playing rugby union of three weeks.**
11. **Thee suspension will commence from the date of our determination, namely 9 October and run up to and including 29 October 2008. He is free to play again on 30 October 2008.**

**Right of Appeal**

12. The Player is reminded of his right of appeal against this decision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Quinlan', written in a cursive style.

**Christopher Quinlan** (Chairman)  
10 October 2008