

**RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION**

**DISCIPLINARY HEARING**

**VENUE:** Russell Jones & Walker, 50-52 Chancery Lane, London

**DATE:** 15 June 2010

**Player:** Jordan TURNER-HALL

**Club:** Harlequins FC

**Match:** Harlequins v Sale Sharks

**Venue:** Twickenham Stoop, London

**Date of match:** 8 May 2010

**Panel:** Jeremy Summers (Chairman), Peter Budge and Michael Cordell (“the Panel”)

**In attendance:**

Jordan Turner- Hall (“the Player”)

Connor O’Shea – Director of Rugby, Harlequins FC

Don Shaw – Rugby Operations Manager, Harlequins FC

**DECISION**

1. **The Player accepted that he had committed an act of foul play but contended that the Referee had appropriately dealt with the incident. The Panel could not be satisfied as required that the Referee was wrong not to have dismissed the Player and in the circumstances the citing was dismissed.**

**PRELIMINARIES**

2. The Panel convened to consider a charge alleging that the Player was guilty of dangerously tackling an opponent in the eighteenth minute (first half) of the match contrary to Law 10 (4) (e) of the Laws of the Game.
3. The charge followed a citing brought by the Independent Citing Officer appointed for the match.

4. The Player had received the case papers in good time and did not object to the composition of the Panel. No other preliminary issue arose.

### **EVIDENCE CONSIDERED**

5. The Panel considered:-
  - a. The Citing Report.
  - b. The match footage.
  - c. An email from Sale Sharks dated 23 May 2010.
  - d. Oral evidence from the Player.
  - e. Submissions from Mr O'Shea.

### **THE CITING**

6. The Citing Report recorded as follows:

*“Sale centre, Matthew Tait, received the ball and was in the process of passing as he was visibly lowering his body angle. Turner-Hall (Harlequins defender) swings his right arm into the neck area of Tait which coincides (with that contact) with Tait losing possession of the ball forward. Turner-Hall continues with his attempted tackle holding the neck area of Tait very firmly with his right arm. The contact and incident is completed, when Turner-Hall, still holding the neck area of Tait, pulls and twists Tait to the ground, by his neck. Tait was attended to, by the Sale Medical staff, for a number of minutes following this incident. He continued to play but looked a little unsteady on his feet immediately after standing up. I spoke to Chris White, the referee, who was unhappy with the tackle and felt it was an act of foul play. Having reviewed the match footage at a number of speeds, I have reached the conclusion that this tackle is worthy of referral to a disciplinary panel and issue this citing accordingly.”*

7. The match footage was then viewed at full, half and quarter speed. This was reflective of the Citing Report. The Player was seen to join the defensive line late in the play and track across the field from left to right following the attack.

Sale 9 was tackled and rolled onto his back before offloading the ball to Mr Tait. This caused the Player to slip somewhat and lose his balance immediately before making the tackle. The Player's right arm then made contact with Mr Tait's upper chest before riding up to his neck. The force of impact appeared to cause the Player to rotate round on Mr Tate. His arm nevertheless continued to grip Mr Tait's neck and both went to ground. Mr Tait's head initially landed on the Player's chest before falling to the floor.

8. There was no reaction to the tackle from any other Sale player.
9. The Referee was within 10 feet of the incident and appeared to have a good view of the tackle. He penalised the Player and was seen to spend some time explaining his decision and clearly to indicate that the penalty had been given for a high tackle. The Panel was informed that the Assistant Referee had also seen the incident. The Referee had though indicated over the match official's communication system that he was able to deal with the matter without further input from his Assistant.
10. The e-mail submitted by Sale Sharks indicated that some injury had been sustained and had required on field treatment for a short time after the incident. Mr Tait was however happily assessed as being able to complete the game, and no further effects were thereafter felt.

### **THE PLAYER'S CASE**

11. The Player gave evidence on his own behalf. He indicated that he had joined the play late because he was recovering from an earlier incident that had caused him to vomit on the pitch. He accepted without hesitation that he had committed an act of foul play. He had however not intended any ill effect and his tackle had ridden up high when he lost his balance as a result of Sale 9 going to ground directly in front of him. He had spoken to Mr Tait at half time and after the game and apologised for the incident.
12. Mr O'Shea stressed that the tackle had not in any way been malicious and submitted that the Referee had dealt with the matter appropriately at the time. He was concerned that the Citing risked undermining the authority of Referees

to determine matters on the field of play. Neither he nor Harlequins condone foul play and the Player is very well regarded as a hard, but fair, player.

### **DECISION**

13. The Panel was mindful of the provisions of paragraph 14 to Appendix 7 of the RFU Disciplinary Regulations which state:

*“....However, where the offence was detected by a match official, but the cited player was [not] awarded a red card, the Disciplinary Panel must dismiss the citing unless it is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the referee was wrong in not sending the player off”.*

14. Having very carefully considered the evidence and submissions, the Panel could not be satisfied to the standard required by this provision, and the Citing was accordingly dismissed.

### **COSTS**

15. The Citing having been dismissed, no order for costs was made.

*Jeremy Summers*

Chairman

16 June 2010