

## RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

### DISCIPLINARY HEARING

**At:** Holiday Inn, Filton, Bristol

**On:** Tuesday 16 February 2010

### JUDGMENT

**Club:** Redruth RFC

**Match:** Redruth RFC v Wharfedale RFC

**Venue:** Redruth

**Date of Match:** 30 January 2010

**Panel:** Rick Charles (Chairman), John Doubleday and Paul Murphy

**Secretary:** Liam McTiernan

**Attending:** Keith Martin (Solicitor for Redruth RFC)  
David Penberthy (Director of Rugby Redruth RFC)

### Charge and Plea

1. The Club was charged with a Breach of Law 3.1 of the Laws of the Game, in that the Club had more than the maximum (15) players on the playing area during the 45<sup>th</sup> minute of the match, Redruth v Wharfedale. The Club admitted the charge.
2. There was no objection to the Panel.

### The Facts

3. The Panel read the report dated 30 January 2010 which Mr Martin accepted on behalf of the Club was made by Simon Adams, the Assistant Referee. The report describes a "substitution mishap" in the 45<sup>th</sup> minute of play in the following terms.

*"In the 45<sup>th</sup> minute of play the 4<sup>th</sup> official approached me to make 3 substitutions for Redruth. Without having time to radio the numbers to the match referee "Luke Pearce" the subs were sent onto the field of play by the Redruth bench. Only 2 players came off the field to be substituted. The 4<sup>th</sup> official having realized the error immediately informed me that Redruth had 16 men on the field of play I immediately informed Luke that there were 16 Redruth players and he immediately stopped the match, had the extra man removed and restarted play with a Penalty kick to Wharfedale. The total time that Redruth had an extra man was 30 seconds (maximum) and they were in possession of the ball in the Wharfedale half, and this*

*extra man did not influence the outcome of the match.*“

Mr Adams could not be reached on the telephone during the hearing.

4. Mr Martin drew the Panel's attention to the statement of Mr Penberthy dated 8 February 2010 in which he sets out the circumstances. He states that in conjunction with the head coach he decided to make a triple substitution. Nos 2, 3 and 6 were to leave the field and to be replaced by Nos 17,18 and 19. The change took place after a successful drop goal by Wharfedale. At Redruth the role of the 4<sup>th</sup> official is discharged by 2 people. Peter Flack carries out the time keeping function and completion of the Match Result Sheet. Austin Chapman supervises the substitution and liaises with the Assistant Referees. Mr Penberthy prepared the substitution cards which were handed to Peter Flack. The Match Sheet was completed and the numbers of the players to be removed from play were passed to Mr Chapman who took the relevant numbers from the box and went to the Assistant referee who was close by.

5. Mr Penberthy was in the dug out and the next thing he knew was the Redruth No.1 sat down in the dug out together with the No. 2. He realised that only 2 players had come off and one was not supposed to. The Assistant Referee was informed and the message got to the referee within 10 seconds.

6. The Panel was shown the Redruth DVD of the incident. The referee can be seen indicating that players could enter the field of play by waving them on. The referee then looks towards the touchline and puts a thumb up before restarting play. The DVD does not show players entering or leaving the field of play. Mr Martin submitted that the correct approach was followed by the Club and that there was a shared responsibility between the Club and the match officials for what happened. There had been no communication between the Assistant Referee and the Referee.

7. Mr Martin told the Panel that the Club accepted a significant degree of responsibility. Something went wrong and the Club apologised for the extra player being on the field. It was not intended and the Club had acted quickly to draw the attention of the officials to what had happened. The Protocol for Replacements and Substitutes did not give any guidance in relation to how replaced players should leave the field. Mr Martin told the Panel that the Club had an unblemished record. The Club do not usually make multiple substitutions where there is more potential for confusion. Mr Martin explained that the Club has financial challenges that have led to a pay cut for players and staff. He submitted that a significant financial penalty would make matters harder.

### Sanction

11. The Panel considered all had been said on behalf of the Club. There is a clear duty on a Club to ensure that the process of the replacement or substitution of players is adequately administered and properly monitored in order to ensure that no more than 15 players are on the playing area

during play as required by Law 3. The Panel concluded that the NCA Protocol on replacements and substitutions should be reviewed to ensure that the clearest guidance is available to both clubs and officials on the process and responsibilities.

12. The Panel accepted that the extra player had been on the field for about 30 seconds before play was stopped and that there was no effect on the game. The Panel also accepted that the Club were embarrassed by what had happened and had taken steps to ensure that it would not be repeated. The Panel also took the view that had the "substitution mishap" described by the assistant referee would not have come to the attention of an RFU Panel had it not itself led to a related allegation of abuse of match officials.

13. Having taken all the circumstances into account the Panel unanimously agreed that a small financial penalty was the appropriate sanction and imposed a fine on the Club of £50 (fifty pounds).

#### Costs

16. Costs of £150 are awarded against the Club.

#### Appeal

17. The Club is reminded of his right to appeal against this decision.

Rick Charles (Chairman)

19 February 2010