

me in the clubhouse after the match and whilst he stated that he thought the sanction was harsh, at no time did he deny his actions or offer an apology”.

3. There was no video of the incident before the panel. The panel considered the minutes of the disciplinary committee of Hull RUFC wherein it was stated;-

“The incident was discussed at length, although the video of the match had not been received from the Lions and therefore not viewed by the Disciplinary Committee. Chris Murphy (the First Team Captain) confirmed he had discussed the matter with the player. Although there was some provocation there was no doubt that the player had punched the Lions Hooker and disciplinary action was therefore warranted”.

DECISION ON ENTRY POINT

4. The Panel concludes that the punch was deliberate and it caused some reaction from other players. The punch was a single punch. It did not knock the victim player over, he was “forced to take a backward step”. The victim player was not hurt by the punch and did not suffer any injury and was able to continue playing. There is reference to some provocation in the Club’s Minutes of their hearing, but the panel had no details of the provocation. In the circumstances set out in the referees report and in accordance with the assessment on entry point required by the RFU regulations, the panel decided the offence would be classified as a mid entry of scale of seriousness.

MITIGATION

5. Save for the disciplinary report submitted by Hull RUFC there was no further evidence of any mitigation. The player was of good character. There were no records of previous dismissals or suspensions. The player had acknowledged culpability, did not seek to contest the referee’s report. There was no evidence of any other mitigating factors listed in Regulation 8.2.8.

SANCTION

6. As indicated above, the panel had categorised this offending at the mid point of seriousness. The mid entry point for striking is 5 weeks suspension. Taking into account the mitigating factors under Regulation 8.2.8 the panel concluded and determined that there was justification for a reduction from the entry point in those circumstances the player was entitled to a deduction of 2 weeks from the mid entry point of 5 weeks. In these circumstances, therefore the appropriate sanction is suspension for 3 weeks.
7. **The player is therefore suspended for a period of 3 weeks from 28.9.09 until 19.10.09. The player may play again on 20.10.09.**
8. Hull RUFC are to be commended for convening the disciplinary hearing into the incident and taking appropriate action promptly albeit the panel disagreed with the level of suspension imposed and the entry point.

COSTS

9. Costs of £150 are awarded against the player/club.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

10. The player is reminded of his right of appeal against this decision in accordance with the RFU Disciplinary Regulations.

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Signed:

Mike Hamlin
Chairman

Dated:

13 October 2009