

RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

DISCIPLINARY HEARING

At: Royal County Marriott, Durham.

On: Tuesday 2nd November 2010.

JUDGMENT

Player: Rob Baldwin

Club: Wharfedale RUFC

Match: Cambridge -v- Wharfedale

Venue: Wests Renault Park, Cambridge.

Match Date: Saturday, 16th October 2010

Panel: Robin Wannop (Chairman) & Derek Morgan.

Secretary: Liam McTiernan (RFU Discipline Department)

Considering: The sending off of Rob Baldwin, Wharfedale RUFC, during the (67th minute of the second half) match Cambridge -v- Wharfedale, for receiving two yellow cards in a match (one technical, one foul play), contrary to Law 10(4)(m).

Plea

The Player and his club were happy to have the case heard in their absence, on a 'papers-only' basis, having indicated their intent to plead guilty in advance of the hearing.¹

Evidence as to Fact

The Panel considered:

- a) The sending off and Sin Bin reports completed by the Referee, John Meredith.
- b) The Wharfedale RUFC response, provided by Antony Davies, Wharfedale Disciplinary Committee Secretary.

¹ Agreed with the RFU Discipline Department as per RFU Regulation 19.4.1.2.

The Referee's Report

The Referees report for the incident of foul play recorded as follows: *"Wharfedale were attacking approximately on the Cambridge 10m line between the 5m and 15m lines. As a Wharfedale player took the ball forward, Baldwin was running alongside him in support. The Cambridge No.14 then tackled Baldwin without the ball so I immediately held out my arm and called for penalty advantage allowed play to continue. As the Wharfedale ball-carrier got tackled, I looked around to check that Baldwin and C14 had got up and saw them both on the floor. C14 was on top of Baldwin. I then saw Baldwin throw several punches to the head area of C14.*

"I blew my whistle, immediately after which another punch was thrown by Baldwin. Players from both sides came in and pulled them apart without further incident. At no point did I see the C14 throw any punches to provoke Baldwin.

"I consulted with the near Assistant Referee (AR1) who confirmed the illegal tackle by C14 and stated that he had then chosen not to release Baldwin on the floor and had stayed on top of him deliberately but no punches had been thrown by C14. Therefore, I reversed the original penalty for the illegal tackle and yellow-carded Baldwin which resulted in a red card as he already received a yellow in the game. There were no complaints from Baldwin and he immediately apologised after the game. No injuries were sustained by C14 and he continued to play in the match."

The Wharfedale RUFC Response

Wharfedale RUFC accepted the Referee's report and immediately banned the Player for one week, from 19th October to 26th November 2010, pursuant to the relevant RFU Regulations, at the Wharfedale Disciplinary Committee meeting on 19th October 2010.

Sanction.

The Panel notes that Wharfedale would, quite correctly, have been within their rights to reach the conclusion that the appropriate sanction was 'Sending Off Sufficient'. They have taken firmer action to combat a perceived pattern of behaviour, insofar as the Player's responses to provocation constituted such a pattern, and to deter others from similar offending. The Panel congratulate Wharfedale for their tough stance and endorse their sanction. The Player is therefore suspended from playing rugby union for a period of 1 week, from 19th October to 26th October 2010, and is accordingly free to play with immediate effect.

Costs

The Panel makes an award of costs² against the Player/Club in the sum of £80³.

² As per RFU Regulation 19.8.3.1.

³ As per RFU Regulation 19, Appendix 3.

Right of Appeal

The Player/Club has a right of appeal against this decision as set out in RFU Regulations.⁴

Signed: Robin Wannop, Chairman.

Date: 10 November 2010.

⁴ As per RFU Regulation 19.10.1.4.