

DISCIPLINARY HEARING

VENUE: Russell Jones & Walker, Chancery Lane, London

DATE: 27 February 2012

Official: Nick LLOYD

Club: Hertford RFC

Match: Hertford v Clifton

Venue: Hertford

Date of match: 18 February 2012

Judicial Officer: Jeremy Summers

Secretary: Rebecca Morgan

In attendance:

Nick Lloyd – Director of Rugby, Hertford RFC

To consider: A charge of conduct prejudicial to the interests of the game or the Union contrary to Rule 5.12 of the Rules of the Rugby Football Union 2006/2007. It being alleged that during the above match Mr Lloyd made offensive comments to the match referee as follows:

“Fucking hell ref, you can't do that, they've gone 20 metres for fucks sake.”

PRELIMINARY ISSUES

1. Mr Lloyd did not object to the appointment of a single Judicial Officer.
2. No preliminary issues arose.

PLEA

3. Mr Lloyd admitted the charge that was read out to him.

EVIDENCE

4. The Judicial Officer considered the following:
 - 1) The Charge Sheet
 - 2) Submissions from Mr Lloyd

MITIGATION

5. Mr Lloyd could not recall the exact words used but accepted he had acted inappropriately. He did not think that his words had been spoken directly at the Referee but agreed they were in reference to him and that they would have been heard by those attending the game.
6. The game had been exceedingly tense not least because his club is in a relegation battle. The incident had occurred in the 78th minute when nerves were particularly frayed.
7. Mr Lloyd has no previously disciplinary record and was plainly remorseful for his actions.

SANCTION

8. Although this matter was charged as a contravention of RFU Law 5.12 and so not bound to the sanctioning table at Appendix 2 to RFU Regulation 19, the Judicial Officer noted that there is an offence within the table set out at that Appendix of *verbal abuse of match officials* (contrary to Law 10.4 (s)). Mr Lloyd had in fact been issued with a Red card by the Referee following his intervention.
9. The role of match officials, and the respect that they must be afforded is integral to the game. In the view of the Judicial Officer it is highly important that due protection is given to match officials to ensure that this fundamental tenet is observed, and that accordingly it was appropriate to follow the tariff prescribed for the 10.4 (s) offence.
10. Having done so the Judicial officer determined that the conduct should plainly be equated with a low end offence in light of the words used and the fact that the conduct consisted of a single and brief incident.
11. The low end entry point for a 10.4 (s) offence is 6 weeks. Mr Lloyd had pleaded guilty, was clearly remorseful and had no previous record. As such he was entitled to a 3 week discount from the entry point by way of mitigation.
12. Mr Lloyd was accordingly suspended for a period of 3 weeks from 28 February 2012 until 19 March 2012. He is free to resume his duties on 20 March 2012.
13. The terms of the suspension are that Mr Lloyd is banned from the playing enclosure, touchline, technical areas, tunnel or any dressing rooms on any match day involving any Hertford team, home or away, up to and including 19 March 2012.

COSTS

14. Mr Lloyd or Hertford shall pay the costs of the hearing of £200 in accordance with Appendix 6 of the Regulations, to be paid within 21 days of receipt of this judgment.

APPEAL

15. Mr Lloyd was advised of his right of appeal against this judgment, which must be lodged by not later than 10.00am on the 14th day following receipt of this judgment.

1 March 2012

Jeremy Summers

Judicial Officer