

DISCIPLINARY DECISION



Match	Australia v USA		
Competition	Pacific Four Series 2025		
Date of match	17 May 2025	Match venue	GIO Stadium, Canberra
Applicable rules	World Rugby Regulation 17		

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE

Player's surname	Kelter	Player's forename(s)	Alev
Player's Union	USA	Date of birth	21 March 1991
Referee's name	Aimee Barrett-Theron		
Foul Play	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input type="checkbox"/> Not admitted	Red card warranted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input type="checkbox"/> Not admitted
Offence	9.12 (physical abuse, stamping)	SELECT: Red card <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citing <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If "Other" selected, please specify:	
Summary of Sanction	3 matches		

HEARING DETAILS

Hearing date	20 May 2025 (NZ time)	Hearing venue	Via zoom
Chairman/JO	Michael Heron KC		
Other Members of Disciplinary Committee	Becky Essex (England), former player Ofisa Junior Tonu'u (NZ), former player		
Appearance Player	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Appearance Union	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Player's Representative(s)	James Gillenwater, Player's Counsel Sione Fukofuka, Head Coach USA Rugby Alana Gattinger, Team Manager USA Rugby Tamara Sheppard, GM High Performance USA Rugby	Disciplinary Officer and/or other attendees	Susan Barry, Disciplinary Officer World Rugby Joyce Hayes, Disciplinary Coordinator World Rugby
List of documents/materials provided to Player in advance of hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video footage various angles • Australian player statement • Referee report • Australian team doctor medical report • Team sheets • Tournament manual and Reg 17 		

SUMMARY OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CITING/REFEREE'S REPORT/INCIDENT FOOTAGE

USA Player stamped on the head of the Australian player who was on the ground. USA Player looked down at opposition player and repeatedly stamped down and made contact with the head.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF OTHER EVIDENCE (e.g. medical reports)

Australian team doctor medical report:

Despite the risk of more severe trauma, Gold 13 sustained only contusions. A left lateral periorbital contusion with significant swelling and discolouration but without evidence of associated fracture; bruising to her right hand; and bruising to her chest. The left eye did not sustain any additional trauma and vision was not impaired by the blows.

SUMMARY OF PLAYER'S EVIDENCE

Player accepts foul play and that it met the Red Card threshold. The player disputed that the contact with the head was intentional but accepted it was reckless.

Player stated in evidence:

As Georgie held on to my leg after breaking the tackle I heard "hold her up" from the opposition.

Then, after being lifted into the air by other players joining the tackle, I was being held up and pulled in multiple directions, I felt a hard twist on my ankle and an extremely painful tweak in my knee. This created a lot of fear of tearing my ACL as my leg was trapped in an awkward position. As a result I wanted to immediately break free and unfortunately compounded the dangerous situation by driving my open leg to the ground to find stability in contact. I was aware that Georgie was on the ground beneath me, but I could not see where Georgie's head was and my foot must have made incidental contact with her head. My fear about my knee and the position that I was in in that moment impacted my actions. I feel shame and remorse that my leg movement was reckless and I am relieved that Georgie was able to finish the game.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Committee found that there was foul play and that it met the Red Card threshold consistent with the referee's decision. There was contact with the head by the Player's boot. The Player repeatedly stamped her foot and deliberately so but the Committee accepted the Player's evidence that she did not intend to contact the head and that she was acting that way because of her fear of damage to her knee due to the vulnerable position she found herself in. On careful review of the footage, and considering the Player's evidence and submission, the Committee found that the Player was not deliberately targeting the head of the Australian player, but rather was reckless in her actions (as she accepted). The contact to the head was glancing or grazing rather than direct and targeted. The Committee was not satisfied that the Player looked down and was aware she was contacting the head of the Australian player.

DECISION

Foul play	Admitted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determined <input type="checkbox"/> Not determined <input type="checkbox"/> Other disposal (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>
Red card warranted	Admitted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determined <input type="checkbox"/> Not determined <input type="checkbox"/> Other disposal (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>

SANCTIONING PROCESS

ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS

Assessment of Intent – R 17.18.1(a)-(b) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Intentional <input type="checkbox"/>	Reckless <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
State Reasons	
As above	
Nature of actions – R 17.18.1(c) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Repeated and dangerous	
Existence of provocation – R 17.18.1(d) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
N/A, although responding to a situation where she was also vulnerable	
Whether player retaliated – R 17.18.1(e) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
N/A, although responding above	
Self-defence – R 17.18.1(f) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
N/A	
Effect on victim – R 17.18.1(g) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Contusions with significant swelling and discolouration, but no evidence of associated fracture	
Effect on match – R 17.18.1(h) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Nil	
Vulnerability of victim – R 17.18.1(i) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Vulnerable position	
Level of participation/premeditation – R 17.18.1(j) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Not premeditated but repeated	

Conduct completed/attempted – R 17.18.1(k) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
Complete
Other features of player's conduct – R 17.18.1(l) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
Repeated use of foot, reckless as to contact with head

ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS CONTINUED

Entry point (select entry point and indicate n° of weeks/matches starting point)		
Top end* <input type="checkbox"/>	Mid-range x	Low-end <input type="checkbox"/>
N° of Weeks/Matches	N° of Weeks/Matches 6	N° Weeks/Matches

*If Top End, the JO or Panel should identify, if appropriate, an entry point between the Top End and the maximum sanction and provide the reasons for selecting this entry point, below.

In making this assessment, the JO/Committee should consider World Rugby Regulations 17.18.1(a), 17.18.1(g), and 17.18.1(h) or the equivalent provisions within the Tournament Rules referred to above.

Reasons for selecting Entry Point above Top End

RELEVANT OFF-FIELD MITIGATING FACTORS

Acknowledgement of commission of foul play – R 17.19.1(a) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	Player's disciplinary record – R 17.19.1(b) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
Yes	Sevens - Has previous red card in 2019 and one match suspensions for accumulated yellows in both 2019 and 2021. No red cards or citings in XVs. One citing commissioner warning.
Youth and/or inexperience of player – R 17.19.1(c) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	Conduct prior to and at hearing – R 17.19.1(d) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
Experienced	Exemplary conduct in hearing, accepting foul play and red card, very remorseful
Remorse and timing of remorse – R 17.19.1(e) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	Other off-field mitigation – R 17.19.1(f) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
Player was remorseful and expressed so indirectly (via USA captain). Did not apologise immediately to the victim player due to fear of retaliation	

Number of weeks/matches deducted

3

Summary of reason for number of weeks/matches deducted:

The Committee accepted there was no intention to contact the player's head and that the conduct was reckless. The Player explained the rationale for her actions (panic due to fear of injury to knee) and expressed sincere remorse for her actions. Her disciplinary record in XVs was clear of any red cards or citings. The record in Sevens was not sufficiently recent or similar to disqualify her from receiving the full discount.

ADDITIONAL RELEVANT OFF-FIELD AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Player's status as an offender of the Laws of the Game – R 17.20.1(a) (or equivalent Tournament rule)

N/A

Need for deterrence – R 17.20.1(b) (or equivalent Tournament rule)

N/A

Any other off-field aggravating factors – R 17.20.1(c) (or equivalent Tournament rule)

N/A

Number of additional weeks/matches

0

SANCTION

NOTE: PLAYERS ORDERED OFF OR CITED BY A CITING COMMISSIONER ARE PROVISIONALLY SUSPENDED PENDING THE HEARING OF THEIR CASE, SUCH SUSPENSION SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN SANCTIONING – R 17.12.5(f) / 17.13.7 (or equivalent Tournament rule)

Total sanction	3 weeks (3 matches)	Sending off sufficient <input type="checkbox"/>
Sanction commences	With the International match on 24 th May <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ USA v New Zealand – Saturday 24th May Then followed by the two professional matches below <p>WER (Women's Elite Rugby – Professional League in the USA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bay Breakers v Chicago Tempest – Saturday 7th June○ Bay Breakers v Denver Onyx - Saturday 14th June	
Sanction concludes	14 th June following the last match above	
Matches/tournaments included in sanction	As above	
Costs	N/A	

Signature
(JO or Chairman)



Date

20 May 2025

NOTE: YOU HAVE **48 HOURS (15s) / 24 HOURS (7s)** FROM NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION OF THE CHAIRMAN/JO TO LODGE AN APPEAL WITH THE TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR – R 17.24.2(a) / R 17.38.1 (or equivalent Tournament rule)