DISCIPLINARY DECISION

	France v Ireland		
Competition	Rugby World Cup Women's 2025		
Date of match	14 September 2025	Match venue	Sandy Park, Exeter
Applicable rules	Tournament Disciplinary Programme		

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE

Player's surname	Feleu	Player's forename(s)	Manae
Player's Union	France	Date of birth	3 February 2000
Referee's name	Aimee Barrett-Theron		
Foul Play	☒ Admitted ☐ Not admitted	Red card warranted	☐ Admitted ☒ Not admitted
Offence	Law 9.13	SELECT: Red card ☐ Citing ☒ Other ☐ If "Other" selected, please specify:	
Summary of Sanction	3 weeks/matches, to be reduced to 2 weeks/matches upon successful completion of coaching intervention programme.		

HEARING DETAILS

Hearing date	16 September 2025	Hearing venue	Remote (at Player's request)
Chairman/JO	Christopher Quinlan KC, Judicial Panel Chair		
Other Members of Disciplinary Committee	Juan Pablo Spirandelli, Argentina, former referee Bogdan Zebega, Romania, former player		
Appearance Player	Yes ☒ No ☐	Appearance Union	Yes ☒ No ☐
Player's Representative(s)	Oliver Harland (Northridge Law) Christophe Reigt (Manager in charge of France Womens' teams) Lionel Rossigneux (Team Service Manager, FFR) Edward Reay-Jones (Head of Legal Affairs and Compliance, FFR)	Disciplinary Officer and/or other attendees	Stephan Smith, Disciplinary Officer
List of documents/materials provided to Player in advance of hearing	• Citing report • Footage of the incident • Interview of Aoibheann Riley • Player's submissions to the Foul Play Review Committee ('FPRC') and to the Disciplinary Committee		

	• FPRC decision • Statement from Stephan Smith, Senior Counsel World Rugby and Disciplinary Officer

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

In his report the Citing Commissioner described the incident as follows:

"*I9 came away from a driving maul and passed to her outside wing.*
After releasing the ball, I9 was tackled by F4 (Manae Feleu) and whilst on the ground, immediately gestured that there had been contact to the head. On reviewing the video footage, F4 can be seen coming into the tackle, with height and driving into I9 with the video angles being consistent with I9's complaint of being struck to the head. On viewing the footage, there was clearly contact to head of I9 from both head and shoulder of F4."

That description accorded in general terms with the footage. We set out our factual findings below.

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

The Citing Commissioner interviewed the Ireland #9. She said as she passed the ball she was *"hit straight in the head"* and was *"pretty sure"* that the contact was head on head. She said the head contact was *"the first thing I felt".* She said her head hurt. She was not removed for HIA.

A medical report obtained from Dr Matthew Cosgrave, the Ireland Team Doctor, on 15 September 2025 states:

"Aoibheann Reilly (#9) suffered a head/shoulder to head contact from an opposing player. I assessed this injury post match. The athlete reported mild pain to the right occipital area. There was nothing of note on examination. There were no signs or symptoms of concussion immediately post match or on assessment 24 hours after the incident."

SUMMARY OF PLAYER'S EVIDENCE

The Player gave an oral account consistent with her written statement in which she stated:

"I tackled Ireland #9, but felt that the main point of contact was with my upper torso / left shoulder to her left shoulder. I believe that this is demonstrated in the footage (see Exhibit A). At the time, I did not feel that there had been contact with Ireland #9's head but, having now seen the footage, I do accept that there was also head contact due to my forward momentum when the initial contact occurred."

Exhibit A was a still taken from the footage showing the moment before head contact. She said the referee awarded the penalty for the tackle.

When asked by us, the Player said she couldn't recall if there was head in head on head contact.

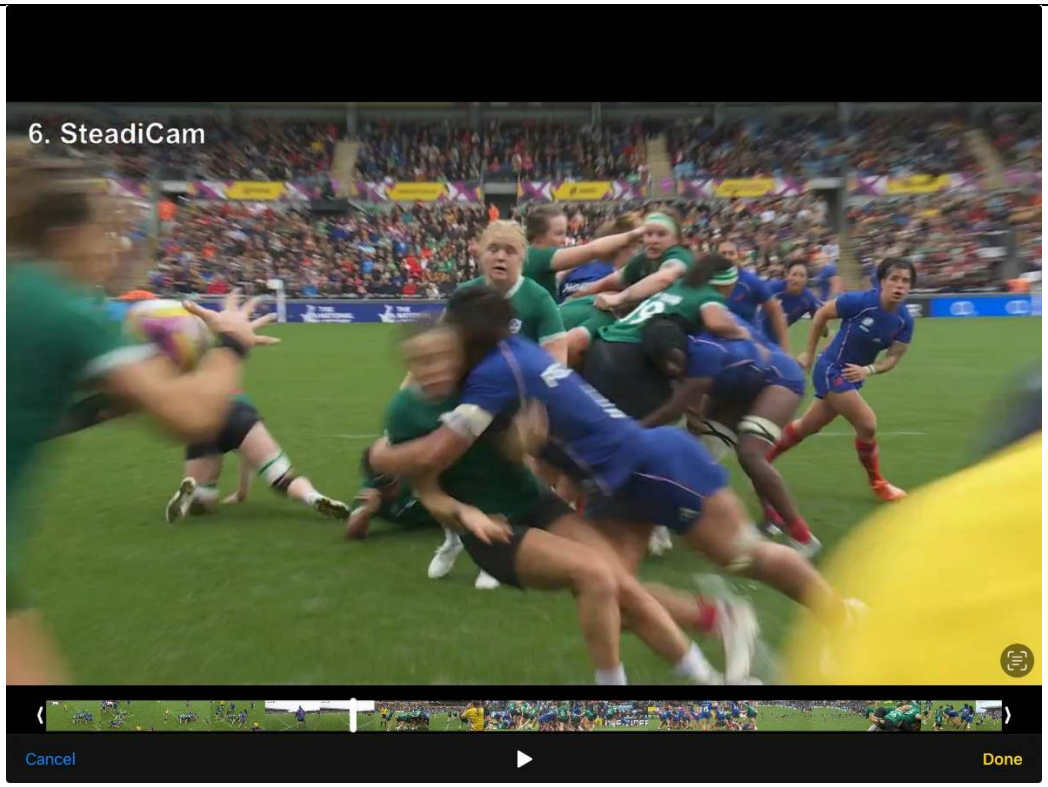
FINDINGS OF FACT

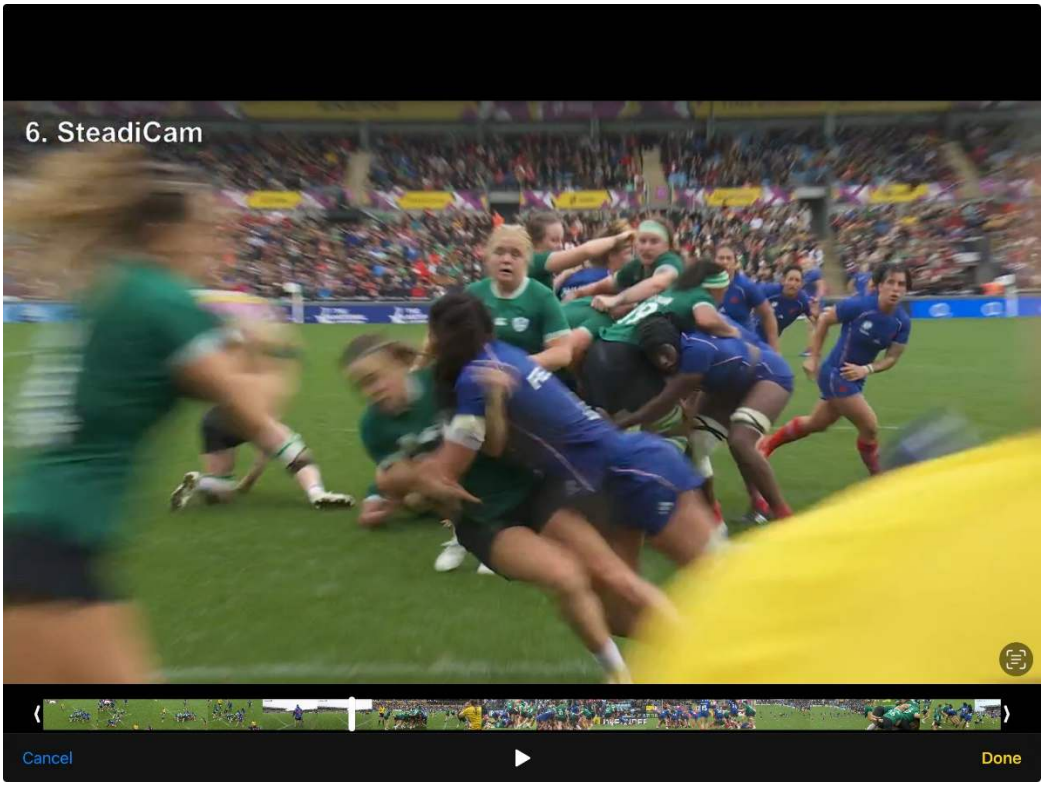
We were satisfied (on the balance of probabilities) of the following facts.

- Having removed the ball from the maul and just after she passed the ball, Ireland #9 was tackled by the Player. At the moment Ireland #9 was tackled she was at about 90 degrees to the Player, her left side facing her.
- The Player was bent at the hips, her upper body angled at about 45 degrees to the horizontal.
- Moving forwards and upwards, the Player tackled Ireland #9. It was a dynamic tackle.
- The Player's left shoulder made significant and forceful direct contact the left side of the player's face and neck. If the Player's shoulder/upper body first made contact with the shoulder of the Ireland #9,

that contact was minimum and did little if anything to reduce the force of the impact to face and neck. There may also have been head on head contact.

- We have attempted to show the moments before and at impact with these stills.





- Ireland #9 was tackled to the ground. As and after she got up, she motioned to the left side of her head, consistent with having been struck there.
- The footage is supported by the statement from Ireland #9.

This citing complaint must be determined by application of the Head Contact Process ('HCP'). Turning to that we concluded:

1. There was head contact.
2. There was foul play. The Player was high and hitting up.
3. The degree of danger we assessed as high. There was direct contact with Ireland #9 head with significant force.
4. There was no mitigation: she had a clear line of sight, the Ireland #9 did not suddenly and significant drop her height, she was hitting up and was not passive.

In accordance with World Rugby Regulation 17.15.3, if "*the Player does not accept that the act(s) of Foul Play which is the subject of the disciplinary hearing warranted the Player being Ordered Off or cited, the burden of proof rests on the Player to show that the referee/citing commissioner was wrong*." In light of our factual findings and in application of the HCP, we concluded the admitted act of foul play merited a red card. Accordingly, the Player failed to discharge the burden and the citing complaint was upheld.

DECISION

Foul play	Admitted ☒ Determined ☐ Not determined ☐ Other disposal (please state) ☐
Red card warranted	Admitted ☐ Determined ☒ Not determined ☐ Other disposal (please state) ☐

SANCTIONING PROCESS

ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS

Assessment of Intent – R 17.18.1(a)-(b) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Intentional ☐	Reckless ☒
State Reasons	
This was a inaccurately executed tackle. It was not intentional foul play.	
Nature of actions – R 17.18.1(c) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
As described in the findings of fact	
Existence of provocation – R 17.18.1(d) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
None	
Whether player retaliated – R 17.18.1(e) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
The Player did not retaliate.	
Self-defence – R 17.18.1(f) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
No question of self-defence arises.	
Effect on victim – R 17.18.1(g) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Ireland #9 suffered transient pain	

Effect on match – R 17.18.1(h) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
None.
Vulnerability of victim – R 17.18.1(i) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
She was not vulnerable in any meaningful sense.
Level of participation/premeditation – R 17.18.1(j) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
It was not premediated.
Conduct completed/attempted – R 17.18.1(k) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
The act was complete.
Other features of player's conduct – R 17.18.1(l) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
None

ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS CONTINUED

Entry point (*select entry point and indicate n° of weeks/matches starting point*)		
Top end* ☐	Mid-range x	Low-end ☐
N° of Weeks/Matches	6 Weeks/Matches	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)
The Player admitted committing foul play which merited a red card.	The Player has a clean disciplinary record.
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)
The Player is neither inexperienced nor especially youthful.	Exemplary and impressive, especially when she was obviously devastated as she learned she could play no further in the Tournament.
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)
The Player accepted committing foul play and apologised to the Ireland #9.	None.

Number of weeks/matches deducted	3

Summary of reason for number of weeks/matches deducted:
The Player was entitled to receive full mitigation and did so.

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)
Not applicable
Need for deterrence – R 17.20.1(b) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
Not applicable
Any other off-field aggravating factors – R 17.20.1(c) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
None.

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/matches. The Player is eligible for the coaching intervention programme which the Disciplinary Committee approves. Successful completion of that will reduce the suspension to one of 2 weeks/matches	Sending off sufficient ☐
Sanction commences	Immediately.	
Sanction concludes	12 October 2025 unless she completes successfully the coaching intervention programme	
Matches/tournaments included in sanction	The Player is suspended from • France's remaining two matches in Rugby World Cup. • Grenoble v Montpellier (11 October 2025) if played as scheduled, unless she completes successfully the coaching intervention programme	
Costs	We make no order for costs.	

Signature (JO or Chairman)	Christopher Quinlan	Date	17 September 2025