

FOUL PLAY REVIEW COMMITTEE

DECISION

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE			
Player's surname	Sapsford	Player's forename(s)	Ollie
Player's Union	Rugby Australia		
Match	Australia A v Japan XV		
Competition	-	Match Date	18 October 2025
Offence	9.11 Players must not do anything that is reckless or dangerous to others including leading with the elbow or forearm, or jumping into, or over, a tackler.	SELECT: Red card ☒ Citing ☐	
Finding of Committee <i>Foul play determined?</i> <i>Red card upheld?</i>	Foul Play admitted Foul play determined. Red Card upheld.		
Summary of Sanction	Three (3) week suspension. Should the Player apply for and successfully complete the Coaching Intervention Programme (if applicable) the suspension may be reduced to (2) weeks.		
Matches/tournaments included in sanction	Three (3) matches for : <i>Match 1</i> ACT Brumbies v HKCR - 8 November 2025 <i>Match 2</i> ACT Brumbies v Western Force - 30 January 2026 <i>Match 3</i> ACT Brumbies v Waratahs - 4 February 2026 The Player will be free to play in <i>Match 3</i> if he applies for and completes the Coaching Intervention Programme, if applicable.		
REASONS FOR DECISION			
Evidence 1. The FPRC received and considered the following material: a. video clip of the incident; b. five (5) Match Official Reports from the Referee, Assistant Referees, TMO and FPRO; c. victim player's (Japan 14) statement and medical report; d. the Player's submission. There Player accepted foul play but did not accept that the Red Card threshold was met.			

Decision

2. The FPRC upheld the Red Card applying the Head Contact Process (2023):
 - a. head contact – Yes. The Player’s right shoulder made contact with Japan #14’s neck and/or head;
 - b. foul play – Yes. The Player’s actions were reckless. He was upright and he admitted he got his positioning wrong;
 - c. degree of danger – High. The Player was dynamic. There was high force (Japan #14 described “intense contact”); and
 - d. mitigation – None. The Player had clear line of sight. He did not make an attempt to change his height. There was no significant drop or movement from Japan #14.

Sanction

3. The FPRC applied the mandatory mid-range entry point of 6 weeks due to the head contact. There was no injury and the victim player played on. There was no basis for moving to top end.
4. Based on the Player’s clean record and experience the FPRC applied full mitigation 3 weeks (reducing sanction to 3 weeks). The player is eligible for the Coaching Intervention Programme, if applicable. If the Player applies and completes the programme, the suspension may be reduced to two (2) weeks.

Note:

In the FPRC’s view, the applicable foul play for this incident should be Law 9.13 – Dangerous Tackling instead of Law 9.11. Whilst there are no provisions under the Expedited Off-Field Sanctioning process which would permit the FPRC to amend the applicable foul play, the FPRC notes the mandatory mid-range entry point for both 9.11 and 9.13 is the same.

Foul Play Review Committee Members	Ofisa Tonu’u (NZ) Valeriu Toma (ROM)		
Signature Chair	 Wang Shao-Ing	Date	19 October 2025