

DISCIPLINARY DECISION



Match	South Africa U20 v England U20		
Competition	Junior World Championship		
Date of match	13 July 2026	Match venue	Avchala Stadium, Georgia
Applicable rules	JWC Tournament Disciplinary Manual Off-field sanctioning process 2026		

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE

Player's surname	Giliomee	Player's forename(s)	Luan
Player's Union	South Africa	Date of birth	7 June 2006
Referee's name	Kevin Bralley		
Foul Play	☐ Admitted ☒ Not admitted	Red card warranted	☐ Admitted ☒ Not admitted
Offence	Law 9.17 A player must not tackle, charge, pull, push or grasp an opponent whose feet are off the ground	SELECT: Red card ☒ Citing ☐ Other ☐ If "Other" selected, please specify:	
Summary of Sanction	No sanction - red card expunged from the Player's disciplinary record		

HEARING DETAILS

Hearing date	16 July 2026	Hearing venue	Audio Visual via Zoom
Chairman/JO	Helen Morgan (New Zealand)		
Other Members of Disciplinary Committee	Chris Morgan (Wales) (former player) Stefan Terblanche (South Africa) (former player)		
Appearance Player	Yes ☒ No ☐	Appearance Union	Yes ☒ No ☐
Player's Representative(s)	Adv Gregory Amm SC – Player Representative David Wessels – SARU General Manager: High Performance <u>Observers/support persons</u> Zingi Hela – SARU Manager: Men's Rugby Chantal du Pisani – SARU General Manager: Legal and Compliance Willemien Van der Merwe – SARU: Rules and Regulations Thato Mavundla – MyPlayers	Disciplinary Officer and/or other attendees	Brian Hammond – World Rugby Legal Counsel/Discipline Lead <u>Observer</u> Sophie Sharp - Intern with World Rugby

List of documents/materials provided to Player in advance of hearing	Video Footage from various angles and at various speeds of the incident Referee's Red Card Report TMO Red Card Report Disciplinary Rules England injury update FPRC player submissions form 3 from Luan Giliomee Response to Judicial Committee Standard Directions Player Statement from Luan Giliomee Supporting Statement from David Wessels with Video Analysis Supplementary Statement from David Wessels
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SUMMARY OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CITING/REFEREE'S REPORT/INCIDENT FOOTAGE
The referee's report stated: <i>15 SA challenged an England player in the air, SA 15 was not in a realistic position to contest the ball. The contact in the air made by SA 15 caused the England player to land in a highly dangerous position.</i> The TMO report stated: <i>Player n15, was not in a realistic position to compete for the ball making contact with England player in the air. The English player landed in a highly dangerous position. The YC was upgraded for 20min red card.</i> The video footage showed: In the 63rd minute of the game, the referee was playing an advantage in favour of England. England was attacking just outside the South African 22-metre line and secured possession of the ball from a ruck. The ball was cleared from the ruck to E10, who kicked it from a central position towards the right wing and into the South African 22. E15 sprinted along the sideline to position himself to catch the kicked ball. At the same time, the Player, who was in his own 22-metre area in front of the goalposts, sprinted after the kick to position himself to catch the ball. Both players jumped for the ball in the same space, E15 significantly higher than the Player. From the moment the ball was kicked until the collision, both the Player and E15 had their eyes on the ball. There was a collision in the air between E15 and the Player. The Player fell to the ground face down. E15 went beyond the horizontal, rotated in the air, put his hands on the ground, landed on his right shoulder on the Player's shoulders, and rolled off to his right to end up face down. The respective team medics attended to their players. There was a muted reaction from the England players in the vicinity of the collision.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF OTHER EVIDENCE (e.g. medical reports)
The England U20s Team and Pathway Operations Manager reported: <i>I can confirm that George luckily did not sustain an injury, nor required treatment following the game.</i>

SUMMARY OF PLAYER'S EVIDENCE
The Player gave the following summary of the incident, both written and oral: • The Player is a member of the South African U20 rugby team and played as full back (No. 15) in the semi-final against England at the World Rugby Junior World Championship on 13 July 2026. • He received a red card in the second half for an offence under Law 9.17 (contact in the air) during an aerial contest with E15. • From the moment E10 kicked the ball, he focused on tracking the ball's trajectory, flight, and speed to position himself to contest, catch, and mark the ball, aiming to end England's advantage play. • The kick from England was a speculative kick, high risk and high reward in the knowledge that they could go back for the advantage from the referee if it failed.

- He believed the intended recipient of the kick was the England wing, not realising it was E15 until after the collision.
- He was aware there was an English player on the right wing side line, but he did not see or know the actual position of the England player during the play, as his focus was solely on the ball and contesting the catch.
- He backed himself to get to the ball first, jump so as to be unable to be tackled by the English players and to take the mark.
- From the kick he has judged that the ball was going to remain in the field of play and it was his to get.
- He first became aware of E15's position at the moment of collision during the aerial contest.
- He properly tracked the ball, timed his jump, and positioned himself realistically to contest and catch the ball, and could not have done anything differently in the moment.
- He has trained for this, he followed his training by sprinting at first and then taking two larger strides, described as "plant strides" to allow him to propel himself upwards to catch the ball.
- He was surprised about the collision with E15 when it happened as it was his belief that he would be first to the ball and therefore able to secure the ball for his team.
- The collision was a fair contest and a 'rugby incident', not foul play, he nevertheless apologised to E15 on three separate occasions after the incident and checked on his well-being.
- E15 was not injured, did not leave the field and the two players swapped shorts after the match.
- The Player has a clean disciplinary record, he has never before received a penalty for an aerial contest.
- He expressed remorse, embarrassment, and guilt over the incident and the red card, stating it is not reflective of his character or how he was taught to play rugby.

Evidence was also received from David Wessels – SARU General Manager High Performance both written and oral:

- He has extensive coaching and technical experience in rugby.
- He attended the semi-final match between South Africa and England and personally witnessed the aerial contest that led to the Player's red card for contact in the air.
- He reviewed video footage and prepared a video analysis, including still images, to illustrate the sequence of events during the aerial contest.
- The video analysis shows that the Player's vision and eyeline were solely focused on the ball throughout the incident, with his plane of vision tracking the ball continuously while positioning and jumping to contest the kick.
- The analysis demonstrates that the Player's field of vision did not include E15 and he had no opportunity to see or adjust to E15's arrival in the contest due to the short time lapse (0.12 seconds) between their jumps.
- At the moment of impact, the Player's body, arms, hands, and eyes were directed towards the ball, and his technique matched recognised and coached standards for aerial contests.
- E15 had both knees raised through the midline (described as unusual and less safe), his hands above his head and his eyes were closed at the moment of collision.
- He asserted that the Player's intention was to contest the ball genuinely, he did not see or make illegal contact with E15 and would have been in a realistic position to catch the ball if not for the collision.
- The Player has a strong disciplinary record, with a 92.5% completion rate in aerial contests and no prior penalties for foul play in his last 341 minutes of play.
- E15 was not injured and did not require medical follow-up.
- He concluded that the incident should be viewed in context, distinguishing it from classic red card examples involving reckless conduct, and maintains that the Player was in a realistic position to compete for the ball.
- He confirmed that the Player has been identified as a player with particular skills in catching the high ball and he used his skills here in a genuine attempt to catch the ball.
- There was no breach of the duty of care owed to the Player to E15 as both players were in genuine competition to collect the ball from the kick and in doing so they both entered the same space and collided in a "rugby incident" which did not involve foul play.
- He completed an analysis of similarities and differences between the incident involving the Player and that of Ireland's Charlie Maloney and the decision of the Judicial Committee of 10 July 2026.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Given the evidence, the consideration for the Committee is whether an act of foul play was committed by the Player.

World Rugby Regulation 17.15.2 sets out that the integrity of Law 6.5(a) of the Laws of the Game and the referee's position as the ultimate judge of fact and law during the Match is unassailable.

World Rugby Regulation 17.15.3 follows to state at first instance disciplinary hearings, in the event that 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.

With the reports from the referee and the TMO submitted to the Committee, the presumption for the Committee is that the match officials are correct, and the Player was not in a realistic position to compete for the ball and collided with E15 in breach of Law 9.17 of the Laws of the Game.

The evidence from and in support of the Player challenges the match officials position on the incident from being an act of foul play warranting a red card to being a genuine and fair contest for the ball and the collision being a rugby incident as a result of the physical nature of the game of rugby.

We found the Player to be genuine and respectful to all participants involved and his evidence followed the video evidence available to the Committee. The video analysis from David Wessels also assisted the Committee in its review of the evidence. The Committee, however, did not consider the analysis of the Maloney case of any assistance to this case due to the differences between the incidents and, more importantly, the requirement to determine this matter on its own merits and evidence.

The Player read the English play from the ruck well. He had seen the referee award advantage to England. As predicted by the Player, England kicked the ball after it came available to them from the ruck in the knowledge that if the play was not successful, they would come back for the advantage.

The Player determined the kick from E10 was going to remain in the field of play, meaning it was his ball to secure for his team. From the kick, the Player's sole focus was to get to the place on the field where the ball would descend and put himself into a position to catch the ball. The Player's evidence was supported by the video evidence, in that from the kick the Player's eyes are always on the ball as he runs to be in position for the catch.

At no time from the kick to the collision does the Player look down or across, there was no hesitation, the only additional action he took was to take a couple of longer strides as he approached the ball, so as to be able to launch for the catch of the ball in the air, as he has trained to do.

The collision with E15 was a surprise to the Player. He genuinely thought he would be first to the ball and would be able to secure possession for his team. There was no intent or recklessness in the collision.

We appreciate that the trajectory of E15 from the collision is aesthetically displeasing and, in isolation, could be assumed to bear the hallmarks of a classic charge of a player in the air in breach of rule 9.17 for the Laws of the Game.

However, a review of the evidence before the Committee demonstrates that the Player made a sincere attempt to catch the ball. He was in a realistic position to catch the ball, as was E15, making the collision between them a genuine rugby incident of two players entering the same space with the same intention at the same time, both genuinely acting to secure the ball for their respective teams, one to attempt to score a try, the other to take the mark to force the play back to the advantage at the ruck.

The Committee finds that the Player was in a realistic and genuine position to compete for the ball, meaning the actions of the Player were not foul play and as such the Committee is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the in-game decision to issue a red card to the Player was wrong.

With a finding of the Player having not committed an act of foul play, the Committee, pursuant to World Rugby Regulation 17.16.3, determines that the Player's actions did not warrant the Player being ordered off and the red card is expunged from the Player's disciplinary record.

DECISION

Foul play	Admitted ☐ Determined ☐ Not determined ☐ No act of foul play ☒
Red card warranted	Admitted ☐ Determined ☐ Not determined ☐ Red card expunged from the Player's disciplinary record ☒

SANCTIONING PROCESS

**Sanctioning process and Sanction not applicable as a result of
the red card being expunged from the Player's disciplinary record**

ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS

Assessment of Intent – R 17.18.1(a)-(b) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Intentional ☐	Reckless ☐
State Reasons	
Nature of actions – R 17.18.1(c) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Existence of provocation – R 17.18.1(d) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Whether player retaliated – R 17.18.1(e) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Self-defence – R 17.18.1(f) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
Effect on victim – R 17.18.1(g) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	

Effect on match – R 17.18.1(h) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
Vulnerability of victim – R 17.18.1(i) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
Level of participation/premeditation – R 17.18.1(j) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
Conduct completed/attempted – R 17.18.1(k) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
Other features of player's conduct – R 17.18.1(l) (or equivalent Tournament rule)

ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS CONTINUED

Entry point (<i>select entry point and indicate n° of weeks/matches starting point</i>)		
Top end* ☐	Mid-range ☐	Low-end ☐
N° of Weeks/Matches	N° of 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)
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)

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)

Number of weeks/matches deducted

Summary of reason for number of weeks/matches deducted:

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)

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

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

Number of additional weeks/matches

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		Sending off sufficient ☐
Sanction commences		

Sanction concludes	
Matches/tournaments included in sanction	
Costs	

Signature (JO or Chairman)		Date	17 July 2026
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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)