

DECISION FORM

To be sent to discipline@rugbyeurope.eu.



Particulars of offence	
Player's Name: Margaux Lalli	
Player's number: 1	
Player's union: Belgium	
Competition: Rugby Europe Women 7s Championship Makarska #1 2025	
Host Team (T1): Belgium	Visiting Team (T2): Germany
Venue: Gradski Sportski Centar, Makarska, Croatia	
Date of match: 13 June 2025	
Rules to apply: Regulation 17 World Rugby Handbook and RE Disciplinary Regulations	
Referee Name: Jenny Lee	
Plea: 1 st YC: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input type="checkbox"/> Not admitted; 2 nd YC: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not admitted (initially)	
Offence: <input type="checkbox"/> Red card <input type="checkbox"/> Citing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <i>If "Other" selected, please specify: Accumulation of 2 YCs in the same match (the referee did not award a RC on the field of play)</i>	
Hearing details	
JO: Val Toma (Romania)	
Hearing date: 13 June 2025	
Hearing venue: Gradski Sportski Centar, Makarska, Croatia	
Appearance Player: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Appearance Union: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Player's Representative(s): Warren Abrahams – Head Coach	
Other attendees:	
List of documents/materials considered by the JO: Referee YCs reports Match footage Clips from 2 camera angles on the second YC incident	
Summary of essential elements of citing / Referee's report / Incident footage	
<p>The hearing has been convened as a result of the Player having been awarded two temporary suspensions (YCs) in the match against Germany. The referee did not award the Player a RC following the issuing of the second YC on the field of play, however this fact is not meaningful from the disciplinary perspective as per Law 9.29 and clause 4.2.3 of RE Disciplinary Regulations.</p> <p>The referee's reports on the two incidents leading to the temporary suspensions were: YC1 – against Law 9.13 – "High tackle" – 4:24 into the first half; YC2 – against Law 9.7(b) – "Intentionally infringe any law of the game" – "Deliberate knock on" – 7:22 into the second half.</p> <p>Due to practical reasons, the Player opted for the hearing to commence as soon as possible. At the time of the hearing the match footage was available on the RE website only, with no possibility to be played frame by frame or zoomed. Upon the Player contesting facts in relation to YC2, the JO adjourned the hearing to get additional evidence. The JO obtained clips of two different camera angles from the TV producer and made it available to the Player, requesting an additional submission within a reasonable time.</p>	

The live footage of the YC2 incident shows the Player tackling the ball carrier along with a team mate, with the three players going to ground. Another German player comes over the tackling area whilst the Player gets back on her feet. She then binds onto the German player over the ball such that a ruck is formed but fails to clear out her opponent. Nonetheless the Player remains in contact with the German player in the ruck. As the ball is secured on the German side, Germany no 6 is in a scrum half position at the back of the ruck and picks up the ball. The Player attacks G6 with her right hand targeting the G6's grip of the ball and breaks the would be pass, just when the hooter signals that the time is over. The referee blows her whistle and awards the Player a YC. From the resulting penalty the German side kick the ball into touch to end the match.

Essential elements of other evidence (e.g. medical reports)

n/a

Summary of player's evidence

The JO explained to the Player that, when a referee decision is contested, the burden is on the Player to prove that the referee was wrong.

The Player fully accepted YC1 (the high tackle).

In relation to YC2, the section 4.2.3 (Specific procedure in case of Temporary Suspensions and Citing Commissioner's Warnings) of RE Disciplinary Regulations provides that "Yellow Card for a technical offence may not be challenged".

However, Section 17.3 - Core Principles of WR Regulation 17 reads:

(d) The principles of natural justice shall be adhered to in all disciplinary proceedings. Such principles include, Players cited/Ordered Off shall have the right to know the evidence against them, shall have the right to be heard, to be represented, to produce evidence and defend themselves before independent adjudicators.

...

(n) It is recognised that due to particular circumstances Unions or Associations or their recognised Tournament Organisers may wish for practical reasons to depart from certain provisions of Regulation 17 that are not Core Principles and where appropriate they have the flexibility to do so provided always that no rules or procedures may be introduced (and/or omitted) by any Union, Association and/or their recognised Tournament Organisers in respect of their disciplinary rules that conflict with (and/or do not properly implement) the Core Principles of this Regulation 17, the Principle of Universality as described above and/or are contrary to the Laws of the Game.

As such, the JO allowed the Player to make submissions in relation to YC2.

The Player submitted that she intended to and made contact with G6's hand only, such that her action cannot be a (deliberate) knock-on. The Player also submitted that the trajectory of the ball supports the fact that she did not make contact with the ball. The JO raised to the Player the fact that she, whilst being part of the ruck, played her opponent who was near it and was attempting to play the ball away, in contradiction with the new Global Law Trial 15.18. The Player submitted that the referee issued the YC for a deliberate knock-on, not for a different offence. The live footage was played multiple times but, in the JO's view, whether the contact of the Player's hand was with the opponent forearm/hand or with the ball was not clear and obvious.

The JO proposed to the Player and her representative to adjourn the hearing to get additional footage from the TV producer. The Player accepted and the hearing was suspended.

Within the next hour the JO got from the TV producer two clips: the broadcast angle and a wider angle from the same side but farther away to the Belgium 22. The JO made available the clips to the Belgium team manager and requested a Player submission before a reasonable deadline. The Player's manager, Ms. Marcia De Wolf answered that *"The new angle does not give a better angle, so I guess we do not have enough evidence for the decision to be overturned."*

Findings of fact

The standard of proof for all matters under disciplinary procedures is on the balance of probabilities.

The second camera angle is not relevant or useful due to the fact that the Player's action is obstructed by another player's body in between.

However, the first clip, having been played at various speeds and frame by frame, reveals that the Player reaches to her opponent with a flat palm of her hand, applying a "slap" that makes first contact with the ball which then moves away from Player's hand. Also the ball dynamics is altered such that the German player's pass is broken. The Player's action results in what the referee rightfully considered to be a deliberate knock-on (albeit against Law 9.7(a)). Having regard of the above findings and the Player's written admission, YC2 stands.

Decision

☒ Admitted ☒ Proven ☐ Not proven ☐ Other disposal (please state)

SANCTIONING PROCESS

As per Article 4.2.3 of Rugby Europe Disciplinary Regulations and Appendix 4 of Regulation 17 of World Rugby

ACCUMULATION OF TEMPORARY SUSPENSIONS AND/OR CITING COMMISSIONER WARNINGS

The relevant part of Article 4.2.3 of RE Disciplinary Regulations provides that:

“Where a Player has received over a Match two yellow cards; or a combination of one yellow card and one Citing Commissioner Warning; the designated Judicial Officer is required to apply a sanction for the offence of persistent offending, not for the substantive offences relating to each yellow card and/or Citing Commissioner Warning. Ordinarily, the appropriate entry point sanction in such circumstances is a suspension of one to two weeks.”.

The Appendix 4 (SANCTIONS GUIDANCE FOR ACCUMULATION OF TEMPORARY SUSPENSIONS AND/OR CITING COMMISSIONER WARNINGS) of WR Regulation 17, which is the overarching document in respect of Disciplinary matters, provides :

“1. There is deliberately no guidance within the World Rugby sanctions table(s) to assist a Judicial Officer or Judicial Committee to determine the appropriate sanction in relation to accumulated Temporary Suspensions and/or Citing Commissioner Warnings.

This is an area where judicial discretion is required given the multiple permutations that could emerge (JO emphasis).

...

B. Player receives two Temporary Suspensions/Citing Commissioner Warnings in one Match

1. The Judicial Officer or Judicial Committee is required to apply a sanction for the offence of persistent offending, not for the substantive offences relating to each Temporary Suspension and/or Citing Commissioner Warning (JO emphasis). Ordinarily, the appropriate entry point for persistent offending within a single Match is a suspension of one to two weeks. Sanctioning in these circumstances should be determined by reference to the methodology in Regulations 17.17 to 17.21 and in particular to the application of mitigating and aggravating features.

2. The Judicial Officer or Judicial Committee *may decide* (JO emphasis) *that sending off was sufficient (or otherwise that no further sanction is appropriate) in the following circumstances: ...*

...(b) that exceptional circumstances exist which would warrant no further sanctions being imposed. This situation could arise when a Player was temporarily suspended for an act of Foul Play but on review it was clear that there was no Foul Play or only a minor act of Foul Play had been committed which would not have warranted a Temporary Suspension and/or Citing Commissioner Warning;

...(c) any of the Temporary Suspensions were awarded for so-called technical offences (including following a team warning) not involving a breach of Laws 9.11 to 9.28 inclusive.”

Having given due consideration to the fact that:

- YC1 was an act of dangerous play;
 - YC2 was a so called “technical offence”, having a potential material effect of preventing the opponents from keeping the ball alive in order to score more points and occurring fractions of a second after the hooter such that the resulting penalty ended the match;
 - the leading principle when judging accumulation of TS/CCW is that the JO must apply a sanction for persistent offending rather than for the substantive offences;
- the JO considers that a ‘Sending-off sufficient’ in this particular case, would leave the Player without a meaningful sanction for her persistent offending. The appropriate entry point is therefore a 1 week suspension which cannot be reduced by way of mitigation.

Entry point

1 week suspension.

Relevant off-field mitigating factors

As per Article 4.5 of Rugby Europe Disciplinary Regulations and Regulations 17 of World Rugby


Acknowledgement of guilt and timing:	Player's disciplinary record / good character:
Youth and inexperience of player:	Conduct prior to and at hearing:
Remorse and timing of Remorse	Other off-field mitigation:

Number of weeks deducted: [XX]
Summary of reason for number of weeks deducted:
n/a

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 – RE Discipline Regulations 4.1.4 / 4.4 (or equivalent Tournament rule)

Total sanction: 1 week suspension translated into 1 match of 7s.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sending off sufficient
Sanction commences: Immediately.	
Sanction concludes: After the next match of Belgium women in the tournament.	
Matches/ tournaments included in sanction: Belgium vs Great Britain	
Costs: n/a	

Signature
Name of the JO: Valeriu Toma
Date: 13 June 2025
Signature (JO or Chairman): 

NOTE: You have 48 hours from notification of the decision of the chairman/jo to lodge an appeal with the tournament director – RE Discipline Regulations 4.6.2 (or equivalent Tournament rule)