



DECISION FORM

To be sent to discipline@rugbyeurope.eu.

Particulars of offence	
Player's Name: Beka Gorgadze	
Player's number: 6	
Player's union: Georgia	
Competition: Rugby Europe Men's Championship (2025)	
Host Team (T1): Georgia	Visiting Team (T2): Netherlands
Venue : Avchala Rugby stadium, Tbilissi	
Date of match: February 8 th , 2025	
Rules to apply: Regulation 17 World Rugby Handbook; Tournament Disciplinary Program	
Referee Name: Benoit Rousselet	
Plea: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not admitted	
Offence: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Red card <input type="checkbox"/> Citing <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>If "Other" selected, please specify:</i>	
Hearing details	
Chairperson / JO: Antony Davies (ENG)	
Other Members of the Disciplinary Panel: - Chris Morgan (WLS) - Mark Curran (IRL)	
Hearing date: February 11 th , 2025	
Hearing venue: On remote	
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): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beka Gorgadze, player• Richard Cockerill, Head Coach• Vasil Abashidze, Team Manager• Natashka Donadze, Assistant Team Manager• Natalie Kurtanidze, International Relations	
Other attendees: David Baird-Smith (Rugby Europe)	
List of documents/ materials considered by the Panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red card reports from referee and TMO• Video clips of the incident (4 different angles)• Medical report from Team Physiotherapist, Netherlands Men XV Antoine van den Berg• Statement from Netherlands 2 Robbie Coetzee• Response from Player to Directions, including disciplinary record and playing schedule	
Summary of essential elements of citing / Referee's report / Incident footage	
The reports on a red card submitted by the Match Referee, Benoit Rousselet, and TMO, Julien Castaignede, were almost identical, referring to an incident in the 50 th minute of the game. The details recorded :	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact to the head: Yes• Foul play : Yes	

- Degree of danger : High
- Mitigating factors : No.

We reviewed the match footage. There were four video clips of the incident from four different angles. The footage shows a ruck with Netherlands in possession. Standing off to the right of the ruck is NL2, with a supporting player on his right shoulder. The ball is passed to him. Opposite him, approximately 3 to 4 metres away are the Player and G1. As they advance towards NL2, they pre-bind and accelerate towards the ball carrier, who remains stationary awaiting the impending contact. Neither the Player nor G1 bends forward to make a tackle. The Player is unable to wrap his left arm because it is in contact with G1 and fails to make an attempt to wrap his right arm, which is free, around NL2. There is contact between the right shoulder of the Player and the left neck and jaw of NL2 with force. NL2 remains on the ground, initially on his back, and then turns onto his front and is seen on his knees with his arms supporting his upper torso on the ground in some discomfort. NL2 receives treatment on field. A red card is awarded for the contact.

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

NL2, Robbie Coetzee, described receiving the ball and being hit on the head by G6 supported by G1. He fell down and stayed on the ground because he had pain in his jaw and neck. He received attention from the Physio, who concluded that it was safe for him to play on. He reported a stiff and painful neck but referred to it as being a tough physical match.

The Team Physiotherapist stated that he had gone onto the field after seeing Coetzee going down after being hit on the head by the shoulder of G6. NL2 described pain in his neck and right jaw whilst he was resting on his elbows in a crawling position. The neck was stabilised and further symptoms checked. The pain was regional in the neck and local in the jaw. After applying some pressure to a few points in the neck and undertaking rotation, which did not cause additional complaints, the player's neck was checked again and investigation was made into possible concussion. The jaw moved well and he was declared fit to play on. After the game, a further examination occurred and he recorded a stiff and painful neck with mainly muscular tension. There were no concussion signs and there was a 50% improvement after a few days.

Summary of player's evidence

The Player gave evidence. He started with an apology for the act of foul play, but stated he had no intention to hurt the opponent. He said he'd tried to get low but couldn't drop his height because he was bound onto his colleague. This situation had never happened to him before.

Supported by Mr. Cockerill, he queried whether the impact had been high because there was no concussion reported and NL2 had continued the game. He suggested that we couldn't conclude that the injuries were received in this incident because of NL2's admission it had been a hard game.

When questioned, he conceded that there had been contact between his right shoulder and the head/neck of the opponent and specifically with regard to the absence of an attempt to wrap with his right arm, his height and body position, he said he had tried to get low but could not because he was latched to G1. He denied a high degree of danger and suggested that NL2 had suddenly changed height, giving him no time to adjust. The Committee went through the World Rugby Law application guidelines head contact process with the Player, who confirmed similar responses.

Findings of fact

We found the following :

- That head contact occurred between the right shoulder of the Player and the right jaw area and neck of NL2.
- This was reckless and avoidable foul play.
- That there was a high degree of danger.
- The force was direct.
- The force was high due to the speed with which the Player and G1 closed and collided with NL2.

We considered in some detail the existence, or otherwise, of mitigating factors as this was crucial to our decision as to whether the Referee and TMO were wrong to award the red card on the basis that they had ignored sufficient mitigation. We referred to the process considerations for mitigation contained within the World Rugby Law application guidelines for head contact process and found as follows :

- The Player had a sufficient line of sight to enable him to conclude in sufficient time that he was too high and that head contact would occur.
- The Player's decision to pre-bind with G1 had reduced his options.
- We could not detect any evidence of a sudden and significant drop or movement by NL2. He did not move forward and simply braced himself for the contact.
- The Player did not make any attempt to wrap his right arm.
- NL2 was passive and the Player was in control of the contact and where it would occur.
- The Player's actions were dynamic.
- There was direct force, which was high.

In all the circumstances, we did not feel the Player had discharged the burden of proving on the balance of probabilities that the Referee and TMO were wrong to have awarded him a red card.

Decision

Proven Not proven Other disposal (please state)

SANCTIONING PROCESS

Assessment of seriousness

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

Assessment of intent:

Intentional/deliberate Reckless

State reasons:

The Player accepted his actions had been reckless and because of the pace at which he was moving and his pre-bind with the team mate, he had insufficient time to avoid the collision occurring as it did.

Nature of actions

The Player went at a high speed into contact, having pre-bound on a team mate and did not allow himself enough time to make any necessary adjustments to the point of contact.

Existence of provocation:
N/A
Whether player retaliated:
N/A
Self-defence:
N/A
Effect on victim:
Although appearing in some discomfort on the ground immediately after the collision, the opponent was not injured, as was confirmed by the Physiotherapist. He was able to play on in spite of the injury.
Effect on match:
There was no effect on the match.
Vulnerability of victim:
NL2 had insufficient time to take evasive action and required medical attention on the field.
Level of participation / premeditation:
The conduct was completed but we found no premeditation to cause injury to the opponent.
Conduct completed / attempted:
The conduct was completed.
Other features of player's conduct:
As there was clear head/neck contact the mandatory mid-range entry point was engaged, but in the absence of injury we did not regard this as a top end offence.

Entry point					
Low-end	Weeks	Mid-range	Weeks	Top end	Weeks
<input type="checkbox"/>	[XX]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	[XX]

Reasons for selecting entry point:

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:
The Player had always acknowledged carrying out an act of foul play. When he received the red card, he went to check that NL2 was OK before he left the field. In response to the red card, he acknowledged at the outset that he had committed an act of foul play and expressed remorse.	The Player has one previous red card for a dissimilar matter in 2019 but this was not regarded as sufficiently proximate. The Player is 29, having played 22 years and 10 years as an International. He has played in the top 14 in France for 7 seasons. He is regarded as a senior player in the leadership group and a mentor of younger players, well respected player and person, and one of the few Georgian Internationals to be playing regular rugby in the top 14.
Youth and inexperience of player:	Conduct prior to and at hearing:
The Player is an experienced International and top 14 league player.	We found the Player's approach to be measured and appropriate, with full engagement with the disciplinary process and honest replies to the Committee's questions, even when the answers were not helpful to his case.
Remorse and timing of Remorse	Other off-field mitigation:
In addition to the apology on the field, the Player spoke with NL2 after the game to apologise again and they shook hands and we felt that the Player's statement that he was relieved that the opponent had not been injured to be genuine.	

Number of weeks deducted: 3

Summary of reason for number of weeks deducted:
 The Player had always acknowledged committing the act of foul play. We found the previous red card insufficiently proximate and for a dissimilar matter. Although the Player did not admit the actions warranted a red card, we could not conclude that he should be penalised for asking the Disciplinary Committee to consider mitigation he felt applied, but which had not been considered by the Referee and TMO. In accordance with World Rugby guidelines, we felt this should not disqualify him from achieving the maximum element of mitigation.

Additional relevant off-field aggravating factors*As per Article 4.5 of Rugby Europe Disciplinary Regulations and Regulations 17 of World Rugby***Player's status as an offender of the Laws of the Game:**

None found.

Need for deterrence:

None found.

Any other off-field aggravating factors:

None found.

Number of additional weeks: 0**Summary of reason for number of weeks added:****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: 3 weeks/matches	<input type="checkbox"/> Sending off sufficient
Sanction commences: 08/02/2025	
Sanction concludes: 03/03/2025 (but see below)	
Matches/ tournaments included in sanction: 16/02/2025 Spain v Georgia Rugby Europe Championship, 22/02/2025 Castres v Pau (Top 14) on the basis of evidence that the Player would be released back to his Club in this Rugby Europe fallow weekend, 02/03/2025 Rugby Europe Championship Semi-Final (for which Georgia has qualified).	
The Player and his Coach indicated that as there had been contact with the head, the Player would wish to participate in the Coaching Intervention Programme. In the event that the Player does, and successfully completes that Programme, he will be entitled to a reduction in the suspension of one match and this match will be the Rugby Europe Championship Semi-Final scheduled for 02/03/2025. Provided World Rugby confirms his successful completion of the Coach Intervention Programme, he will be available for this game and the suspension will therefore end on 01/03/2025.	
Costs:	None sought, nor awarded.

Signature

Name of the JO or Chairman: Antony Davies

Date: 12th February 2025

Signature (JO or Chairman):

Antony Davies

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)