

DECISION FORM

To be sent to discipline@rugbyeurope.eu.



Particulars of offence	
Player's Name: Luka Ivanishvili	
Player's number: 6	
Player's union: Georgia	
Competition: Rugby Europe Championship	
Host Team (T1): Georgia	Visiting Team (T2): Spain
Venue: Avchala Rugby Stadium	
Date of match: 21/02/2026	
Rules to apply: Regulation 17 World Rugby Handbook; Rugby Europe Disciplinary Regulations	
Referee Name: Sam Grove-White	
Plea: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input type="checkbox"/> Not admitted	
Offence: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Red card <input type="checkbox"/> Citing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <i>If "Other" selected, please specify: 20-min Red Card</i>	
Hearing details	
Chairperson: Daniel Gore (ENG)	
Other Members of the Disciplinary Panel: - Val Toma (ROM) - Donal Courtney (IRL)	
Hearing date: February 24 th , 2026	
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): Marco Bortolami (Georgia Rugby Union, Head Coach), Jaba Bregvadze (Georgia Rugby Union, Team Manager)	
Other attendees: Arthur Magdalou (Rugby Europe)	
List of documents/ materials considered by the Panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red-card report• Game sheet• 8 video Clips of the incident (including slow motion and reverse angle provided by Georgia)• Player Statement• Medical Report from Federación Española de Rugby• Player Statement from Iñaki Mateu (wearing Number 13 for the match)• Game Sheet• Evidence from Player in relation to Matches for Sanction	
Summary of essential elements of citing / Referee's report / Incident footage	
The Referee's report stated as follows: <i>"Upright tackle, head contact, high degree of danger, no mitigation"</i> Video footage of the incident was provided from several angles and appeared to show an incident as described in the Referee's report, although we note below the angle provide by the Georgian Rugby Union.	

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

The Medical Report from Dr. Sebastián Cruz Morandé of the Federación Española de Rugby stated as follows:

- '1. Point of contact: Right shoulder and head.*
- 2. Nature and extent of injury: Shoulder contusion*
- 3. Treatment required: no need treatment*
- 4. Whether the player continued playing: Yes, the player was able to continue playing the match.*
- 5. Medical update: No further treatment has been required.*
No additional injuries identified beyond the shoulder/head contusion.
No symptoms or clinical signs of concussion were present at any time.
- 6. Availability for training or matches: No trainings or matches were missed.*
- 7. Any other medical element that you will judge relevant: no'*

A statement was also provided by the Player from Spain which stated as follows:

'During law weekend's match against Georgia, immediately after receiving the ball, I was contacted by the Georgian player wearing number 6, who made direct shoulder-to-head contact with me. The referee issued a red card following the incident. I was assessed on the field by medical staff and was able to continue playing.'

Summary of player's evidence

The Player provided a written statement in advance of the hearing which stated as follows:

'The player accept and take full responsibility that there was high tackle (9.13 dangerous tackle), there was no intention but it was the player responsibility to change level in contact to avoid any contact at shoulders level or above.

Taking into account the reverse angle and the post tackle actions we believe there was no contact with the head and we would like you to consider:

- Initially the tackler change level to try to make a legal tackle (5 sec short reverse angle)*
- The force of the collision goes through the chest and left should of the players tackled (his body spins laterally (6 sec short reverse angle)*
- The medics check the player and they are happy there was no head contact*
- The tackled player luckily got up straight away (26 sec long reverse angle provided)*
- As soon the referee turns to check the video the tackle player stand up (40 sec long reverse angle)*
- The medics don't need to check him again and he continues to play (evidence of no head contact) - No problems on medical report after the game Our final conclusions:*

Yes there was a high tackle and the player take full responsibility and understand the necessity to improve his tackle technique and he commits to keep doing so to avoid any contacts at shoulder level or above.

There was no head contact, the medics didn't hesitate to allow the player to stay on the field, otherwise after the collision the tackled player should have been through the HIA assessment like is strongly recommended after any head contact even for a small one.

We understand it was difficult for the referee to assess there was no head contact during the game, we understand why the referee opted for a red card.

We feel the red card was an enough sanction for the incident and we hope there is no further action.'

At the hearing, both the Player and his representatives provided oral submissions and evidence about the incident. The Player accepted an act of foul play had occurred and conceded that he committed a high tackle which was reckless. The focus of the Player's submissions and evidence were that there was no head contact.

The Player noted in oral evidence that he was in the Defensive line and targeting the Spanish player who he eventually tackled. He was trying to make a legal tackle and knew that he had to get low. He normally targets the hips and chest of an opponent and in this instance he was trying to "*close up as fast as he could*" in the defensive line. He accepted that this was a fast moving incident and conceded that he could not react when he realised he was too high before making contact. His recollection of the incident was that he made contact around his bicep / shoulder and that he did not make contact with his opponent's head.

The submissions from the Player's representatives focused on the assertion that there was no head contact. In particular, they referred to the reverse angle of the footage provided by the Georgian Rugby Union and the reaction from the victim player and Spanish medical team following the incident to suggest that the actions "after the collision" indicated there was no head contact. It was suggested that the lack of any HIA, the lack of any alert from the mouth guard (for which there was no evidence before us) and the fact that the victim player was only on the floor for about 20 seconds after the incident suggested that there was no head contact.

When asked by the Panel to consider the video footage from angles which appeared to show head contact, the Player and his representatives conceded that the images may show head contact but also emphasised that there is a "fine line" between head contact and no head contact. They did not criticise the Match Official Team in any way for coming to the decision they did during the match.

There was also no suggestion of bitterness between the teams so the Player and his representatives accepted the evidence from the Spanish Federation but reemphasised the "fine line" between head contact and no head contact when asking us to consider the evidence of the victim player.

Findings of fact

The Panel considered all of the evidence provided to it and the submissions made about the incident. The Panel also noted the Player's acceptance of foul play.

The Panel's finding is that the Player made direct contact with his shoulder to the victim player's head in a dangerous and illegal tackle. We do find that this was a reckless act caused by the momentum and dynamics of the collision and the Player's lack of control when attempting to make the tackle.

The Panel was grateful for the measured approach of the Player and his representatives and considered carefully the evidence around the incident. In particular, the images of the incident showed in the Panel's view contact between the shoulder of the Player and jaw/chin area of the victim Player. There was a recoiling of the victim player's head immediately after contact and the victim player fell to the floor immediately. The victim player also appeared from the video footage to have felt the force of the impact and, despite the Player's submissions about the length of time the victim player was lying on the floor after the collision, we considered the real time reaction to indicate a significant collision.

We considered the Player's submissions about the medical reaction to the collision but whether or not an HIA took place is not determinative on its own of the factual question we had to determine. Whether the HIA process was correctly followed or not is also not relevant to the determination of the act of foul play.

Therefore, assessing the incident with reference to World Rugby's Head Contact Process:

Step 1: there was Head Contact

Step 2: the Player was upright and made an illegal tackle such that there was foul play (this was also accepted by the Player)

Step 3: the degree of danger was high and met the red card threshold, this was a dynamic collision where the player came out of the defensive line (following a line out) at speed and targeted the potential ball carrier to attempt a dominant tackle, this was a collision at high force and the player was not in control of his body height when entering the collision. There was a significant risk of injury.

Step 4: none of the factors for mitigation were present.

Decision

Proven Not proven Other disposal (please state)

The Player accepted the act of foul play.

SANCTIONING PROCESS

Assessment of seriousness
<i>As per Article 4.5 of Rugby Europe Disciplinary Regulations and Regulations 17 of World Rugby</i>
Assessment of intent:
<input type="checkbox"/> Intentional/deliberate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reckless
State reasons:
The Player evidently attempted to make a legal tackle but failed to drop his height sufficiently and missed his target area on his opponent with the result that he made contact directly to his opponent's head when making the tackle. There was no evidence to suggest this was a deliberate action and the Player clearly attempted to wrap in the tackle.
Nature of actions
Upright tackle which resulted in the Player's shoulder hitting the head of the opponent player.
Existence of provocation:
N/A
Whether player retaliated:
N/A
Self-defence:
N/A
Effect on victim:
There was a medical check which was cleared quickly and the player continued to the play in the Match. No evidence of any HIA and no report of injury in the period following the Match.
Effect on match:
Match was paused for the Match Official Team to review the incident with the Television Match Official but after the pause it continued, the incident happened towards the end of the Match.
Vulnerability of victim:
Vulnerable to the extent he was not expecting head contact but had received the ball and appeared to be bracing for some impact.
Level of participation / premeditation:
Full participation in the incident and no premeditation to commit the act of foul play
Conduct completed / attempted:
Completed
Other features of player's conduct:
N/A

Entry point					
Low-end	Weeks	Mid-range	Weeks	Top end	Weeks
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	10+
Reasons for selecting entry point:					
World Rugby Regulation 17 governs 'Discipline and Foul Play'. The note to Appendix 1 to Regulation 17 provides that: " Any act of foul play where the person committing the act of foul play makes contact with an opponent's head and/or neck, and that contact with the head and/or neck warrants a red card, shall result in at least a mid-range sanction ". In this case, there were no features which would have warranted a higher 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:
Acknowledgement at the earliest opportunity and clear acknowledgement of the act of foul play and seriousness of the incident.	Clean disciplinary record reported.
Youth and inexperience of player:	Conduct prior to and at hearing:
Relatively young player but playing at a high level for a period of time.	Excellent conduct through the disciplinary process including at the hearing and in particular with his considered evidence and the manner in which he presented his case.
Remorse and timing of Remorse	Other off-field mitigation:
Clear remorse in his written statement and at the hearing including apologies to the opposition player after the match and through the hearing itself.	N/A

Number of weeks deducted: 3

Summary of reason for number of weeks deducted:

The Player engaged all of the factors for mitigation and on that basis, and with particular reference to his clean record and excellent conduct at the hearing, he is entitled to the full mitigation available to him of 50% from the entry point.

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:

N/A

Need for deterrence:

N/A

Any other off-field aggravating factors:

N/A

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 (subject to a reduction to 2 weeks provided Player completes WR CIP)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sending off sufficient
Sanction commences: 24 February 2026	
Sanction concludes: 16.03.2026 (or 09.03.2026 subject to successful completion of CIP)	
Matches/ tournaments included in sanction: The Player is suspended for the following matches: 28.02.2026: Bristol v Sale 08.03.2026: Rugby Europe Championship Semi-Final (Georgia v Romania) 15.03.2026: Rugby Europe Championship Final or 3 rd Place Play Off (TBC)* * The Panel grants the Player approval to apply to World Rugby to undertake its Coaching Intervention Programme, and should the Player successfully complete the Programme in time then his sanction would be reduced to 2 weeks and this week would not apply.	
Costs: N/A	

Signature
Name of the JO or Chairman: Daniel Gore
Date: 25 February 2026
Signature (JO or Chairman): <i>Daniel Gore</i>

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)