

ABBREVIATED PROCESS – JUDICIAL OFFICER DETERMINATION



Match	Zebre Parma v Edinburgh Rugby		
Player's Club	Zebre Parma	Competition	United Rugby Championship
Date of match	27 September 2025	Match venue	Stadio Sergio Lanfranchi, Parma, Italy
Rules to apply	United Rugby Championship 2025/26 Disciplinary Rules ("DR")		

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE			
Player's surname	Licata		Number 8
Player's forename	Giovanni	Referee's name	Ben Whitehouse (WRU)
Offence	9.13 A player must not tackle an opponent early, late or dangerously. Dangerous tackling includes, but is not limited to, tackling or attempting to tackle an opponent above the line of the shoulders even if the tackle starts below the line of the shoulders.	SELECT: Red card <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citing <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If "Other" selected, please specify:	

JUDICIAL OFFICER DETERMINATION			
Judicial Officer's name	Ben Rutherford (IRFU) ("JO")	Date of appointment	29 September 2025
Information reviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match footage • Referee's report dated 27 September 2025 (Ben Whitehouse, WRU). Key excerpt: <i>"I saw a high tackle by Z8 live which I penalised. TMO Griffiths then initiated A check. On review, I saw Z8 in an always Upright position attempting to make a tackle on an Edinburgh player, in the upright position he made Head contact. I felt there was enough force to initiate an offfield review as it met the yellow card threshold. After the off field review was completed it was recommended a 20 minute red card should be issued."</i> [sic] • TMO's report, dated 27 September 2025 (Aled Griffiths, WRU). Key excerpt: <i>"After reviewing the footage I identified clear foul play (upright/high tackle) as well as direct head contact to Edinburgh 2. I initiate a formal TMO review, where referee Ben Whitehouse decides it meets the Yellow card threshold and off field review process. Within the off field review process I identify that there is no mitigation and it's a high degree of danger, therefore I recommend to referee Ben Whitehouse that he upgrades the yellow card to a 20min Red card."</i> [sic] • Assistant Referees' reports x 2, both dated 29 September 2025 • Victim player statement dated, undated (Ewan Ashman, Edinburgh no. 2). Key excerpt: <i>"Zebre No 8 tackled me high making contact with his shoulder to my jaw - causing me to go to ground. A penalty was awarded. I stayed down briefly while the medical team checked in with me - I was not injured & while I was getting treatment the Zebre no 8 did come and shake hands."</i> [sic] 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical statement, undated (Andrew Hay, Head Physiotherapist, Edinburgh Rugby). Key excerpt: “...Ewan Ashman suffered no injuries that required management as a result of the red card contact.” • Player’s statement dated 29 September 2025. Key excerpt: “As Ewan carried, I prepared to tackle but remained high and used poor tackle technique. It my first game back since my groin injury that I sustained this summer. This does not justify my action and I would like to take this opportunity to apologize for what I did. I made terrible rugby mistake almost costing my team the game and potentially injuring Ewan. I deeply regret what happened and glad that Ewan carried on playing and that he is ok.” [sic] • Letter from Zebre Parma, dated 29 September 2025, setting out Mr Licata’s absence of a disciplinary record and upcoming schedule.
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Application of Disciplinary Rule 7.6.30

Assessment of intent – DR 7.6.30(a) and (b)

intentional/deliberate reckless

Reasons

E2 was carrying the ball at pace, first phase off a midfield lineout on the near side to the principal TV camera. The Player (Z8), who was in the defensive line, rather than the lineout, attempted to make a tackle on E2. Z8 approached the tackle with clear line of sight and in a relatively upright position, with a slight hinge at the hips but the legs relatively straight. This is best illustrated by the below still image taken from camera 6 (far right corner). The JO agrees with (and commends) his admission that he used “poor tackle technique”. There was no evidence that the high contact was intentional. Z8 made initial contact with E2 around the right side of E2’s jaw/chin with his upper right arm and/or shoulder.



Gravity of the Player’s actions – DR 7.6.30(c)

A forceful high tackle making direct contact with E2’s head (albeit which thankfully did not result in injury)

Nature of actions – DR 7.6.30(d)

Shoulder/upper arm direct contact to E2’s head

Existence of provocation – DR 7.6.30(e)

None.

Whether the Player retaliated – DR 7.6.30(f)

Not applicable.

Self-defence – DR 7.6.30(g)	
Not applicable.	
Effect on victim – DR 7.6.30(h)	
No injury.	
Effect on match – DR 7.6.30(i)	
None. Zebre ultimately won the match in the 79 th minute.	
Vulnerability of victim – DR 7.6.30(j)	
E2 was vulnerable in the sense that he was running at pace into contact holding the ball and unable to protect his head from Z8's forceful shoulder and/or upper arm.	
Level of participation/premeditation – DR 7.6.30(k)	
Full participation / no evidence of premeditation.	
Conduct completed/attempted – DR 7.6.30(l)	
Conduct completed.	
Other features of the Player's conduct – DR 7.6.30(m)	
None.	
Aggravating factors	None.
Mitigating factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To his credit, Mr Licata fully acknowledged his poor tackle technique and that the red card was correctly issued. (b) Zebre Parma's letter confirmed Mr Licata has no disciplinary record. (c) Mr Licata is 28 years of age. He is the Zebre Parma captain and has been with the club since 2017-2018 playing in 89 professional matches according to the Zebre website. He has also played for Italy on 13 occasions. (d) Mr Licata's conduct in relation to this proceeding has been exemplary, providing his statement in good time in which he accepted the referee's report and acknowledged his conduct. (e) Mr Licata sought out Edinburgh no. 2 to shake his hand and confirmed his remorse and apology in his statement. (f) No other factors were brought to the JO's attention.
Summary of Judicial Officer's sanctioning assessment	<p>In assessing the seriousness of Mr Licata's conduct based on the features set out in DR 7.6.30, the JO considered that Mr Licata recklessly executed a high tackle on Edinburgh no. 2, Ewen Ashman, with his right shoulder and/or upper arm. Edinburgh no. 2 was vulnerable to a high tackle as he ran at pace off a lineout carrying the ball with no ability to protect his head. The incident caused no injury to Edinburgh no. 2 and he played on.</p> <p>The JO considered the Note to the World Rugby Sanctions for Foul Play (Appendix 7 to the DR) which states: <i>"Any act of foul play which results in contact with the head and/or the neck shall result in at least a mid-range sanction."</i></p>

	<p>The JO determined accordingly that the appropriate entry point is mid-range. The mid-range entry point for Law 9.13 is a six-week suspension.</p> <p>There are no aggravating factors.</p> <p>There are multiple mitigating factors, including, Mr Licata’s early recognition and acceptance of the red card, clean disciplinary record over a lengthy 100+ professional/international match career, exemplary conduct in respect of these proceedings and remorse and apology to Edinburgh no. 2, including going to him to shake his hand on the day.</p> <p>DR 7.6.34 provides that a mid-range entry point cannot be reduced by more than 50%.</p> <p>In view of the Player demonstrating the multiple mitigating factors as set out above, the JO reduced the sanction from six (6) weeks to three (3) weeks.</p>
Proposed sanction	<p>A playing suspension of three (3) weeks*, based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mid-range entry point of six (6) weeks; • No increase as a result of aggravating factors; and • A reduction of three (3) weeks for mitigating factors. <p>*The JO took into account the Note to the World Rugby Sanctions for Foul Play (Appendix 9 to the DR) which reads: <i>“Where a Player receives a mid-range or top end sanction, a Disciplinary Committee/Judicial Officer/Appeal Committee/Appeal Officer may, at its discretion, agree that one week of the sanction may be replaced by a “Coaching Intervention” that complies with the World Rugby Coaching Intervention Programme.*⁽⁶⁾”</i></p> <p>Footnote 6 states: <i>“The World Rugby Coaching Intervention Programme is only available for foul play offences occurring under the “Head Contact Process”. World Rugby Guidelines for the “Head Contact Process” are set out in Appendix Fifteen to these Disciplinary Rules.”</i> The World Rugby Head Contact Process at Appendix 17 of the DR applies to high tackle cases under Law 9.13. Accordingly, the final week of Mr Licata’s suspension may be replaced by a Coaching Intervention that complies with the World Rugby Coaching Intervention Programme.</p>
Matches / dates covered	<p>The suspension shall apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zebre Parma v Emirates Lions, 5 October 2025 • Ospreys v Zebre Parma, 11 October 2025 • Zebre Parma v Stormers, 18 October 2025* (*may be replaced by a Coaching Intervention in compliance with the World Rugby Coaching Intervention Programme) <p>Each of these matches forms part of the URC 2025/26 season and is clearly meaningful for the player. Should the dates change/matches not be played as scheduled, the JO may amend the effect of the sanction upon application.</p> <p>Subject to the above, Mr Licata is free to play from 12.01am on Monday 20 October 2025 (or 12.01am on Monday 13 October 2025 if he successfully completes a Coaching Intervention in compliance with the World Rugby Coaching Intervention Programme).</p>

Signature (Judicial Officer)	 Ben Rutherford (IRFU)	Date	30 September 2025
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