

# RFU SHORT JUDGMENT FORM



Match (home)	Harlequins Women	Vs (away)	Saracens Women
Club's Level	1	Competition	PWR
Date of Match	02/12/2023	Match Venue	Harlequins

Particulars of Offence			
Player's Surname	Robinson	Date of Birth	22/06/2000
Forename(s)	Emily	Plea	Admitted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Admitted <input type="checkbox"/>
Club name	Harlequins	RFU ID No.	2392728
Type of Offence	Red Card		
Law 9 Offence	9.12 - Striking with the Head		
Sanction	5 weeks		

Hearing Details			
Hearing Date	06/12/2023	Hearing venue	Zoom
Chairmen/SJO	Oliver Clark	Panel Member 1	
Panel Member 2		Panel Secretary	Rebecca Morgan-Scott
Appearance Player	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Appearance Club	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Player's Representative(s):		Other attendees:	
Andrew Rhys Jones (Head of Rugby Ops)		Angus Hetherington (RFU)	
Conflict of Interests	Conflict raised <input type="checkbox"/> No conflict raised <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conflict of Interests	Conflict raised <input type="checkbox"/> No conflict raised <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

List of documents/materials provided to player in advance of hearing:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charge Sheet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Red Card report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player Statement	Video footage Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical report	<input type="checkbox"/> Citing report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Club Statement	<input type="checkbox"/> World Rugby Head Contact Process
Other (Please list below)			
RFU Submissions			



Video Footage was available and clearly showed the incident.

Referee's report:

I had just blown the whistle for full time. A Harlequins player had the ball, and there was some slight shoving between this player and Saracens 13. Saracens 13 pushed the Harlequins player, and Harlequins 7 then ran towards Saracens 13, leading with her head. She made head contact with the side of the head of Saracens 13. I immediately tried to get Harlequins 7 away for her own safety and to try to prevent any further escalation. I then got the replacements off the field (who thought that the game had fully ended) as I wanted to speak to my assistant Gareth Holsgrove to confirm what I had seen. We agreed that there had been no significant provocation sufficient for Harlequins 7 to act as she did. We agreed that it needed to be a red card to Harlequins 7. I explained this to Harlequins 7 and issued a red card."

Medical report:

Sydney Gregson received no treatment for this incident and has not reported anything further on this matter.

Please let me know if there is anything further required from Saracens.

Best wishes

Will Crowley-Johnson | Women's Team Manager

RFU Submissions:

(a); This was an intentional act.

(b); This was not a reckless act.

(c); The Player came from a short distance to deliberately strike the opponent with her head. There was no grappling where the heads happened to be close to one another, the Player made an instant decision to go and strike with the head. This was a heat of the moment reaction. The action took place after the final whistle.

(d); There was provocation in that her teammate was pushed, however, as accepted by the Player her reaction was disproportionate and unnecessary.

(e); It was an act in retaliation to a push on her teammate.

(f); This was not an act of self-defence;

(g); The Panel have the benefit of correspondence from Saracens that indicates there was no injury to the struck player.

(h); There was no ill effect on the match;

(i); The player was not particularly vulnerable;

(j),(k), (l) The player was the sole participant and the offending was complete.

## Summary of Player's Evidence

Player Statement: Emily Robinson

Please find my statement below in regard to the Red Card I received against Saracens Women on Saturday 2nd December 2023.

Firstly, I would like to sincerely apologise for the incident. Upon reflection how I reacted was very out of character and demonstrated a complete lack of judgment where I let the emotion of the occasion get to me.

I accept the charge and would like to repeat how remorseful I am for what happened. We were attacking in our own half and Harlequins No. 22 Ella Cromack was in the process of regathering the ball from Saracens No. 13 Sydney Gregson as the final whistle was blown. Ella regathered the ball and was then pushed into me following the final whistle. I was naturally protective of Ella as a young player and upon witnessing this I then reacted and subsequently headbutted Saracens No. 13. The reaction from myself was not proportionate to the push and I am deeply sorry for my actions in this moment of madness.

Following the game, I sought out Sydney Gregson to apologise in person and reiterated how sorry I was for what had happened. I fully accept my actions and am aware of my obligations to support player safety. I'm disappointed in myself as I understand that actions such as these have no place in the game of rugby.

Character Reference

In my capacity as the Head of Rugby Operations- Women's Programme at Harlequins Rugby Union, I have known Emily as a player for almost 3 years.

I have always found her to be a considerate, selfless, and caring individual. She is a competitive person and player, but blends these commendable playing qualities with being utterly professional and is a respectful individual who holds strong playing values and personal standards.

Emily is part of the leadership group at Harlequins and has captained the team on several occasions across the last two seasons. She is a respected player amongst the staff and player group who takes pride in looking after the younger players transitioning from Centre of Excellence. Her reaction in the game is completely out of character and she is extremely remorseful.

Emily fully accepts the seriousness of the incident and is regretful for her reaction. During immediate conversations with senior staff she demonstrated accountability and was clearly mortified at her actions.

Yours Faithfully,  
A Rhys Jones  
Andrew Rhys Jones  
Head of Rugby Operations- Women's Programm

## Findings of Fact

The player and referee's statements closely matched that of the video evidence.

There was a push by S13, after the whistle had been blown, on one of the Harlequins' players who then bumped into H7. H7 reacted instantly and took three steps towards S13, leading with her head and making direct contact with her forehead to the side of S13's head. H7 was wearing a scrum cap and did not pull her head back prior to the strike, in effect making it more of a charge in which she led with the head, rather than a traditional head-butt.

H7 accepted that this was a mistake and stupid, expressing it as a build up of frustration after another game where Harlequins had not performed to their potential. She stated that she felt protective over her team mate who was only 18 and had been pushed by S13, but did not in any way seek to excuse her actions. Although reactionary and provoked, there was clear intent. The RFU distinguished this between a close-in grapple where head-on-head contact is made; this was a deliberate act, and it was more luck than judgement that meant the act did not result in any injury to S13.

### Decision

Breach admitted

Proven

Not Proven

Other Disposal (please state below)

Offence was admitted at the first instance. The Harlequins representative did not seek to challenge the RFU's submission that this was a mid-range entry point offence. The JO agreed with the RFU's submissions also.

## SANCTIONING PROCESS



### Assessment of Seriousness

Assessment of intent - Ref 19.11.8

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

19.11.8(a) Intentional

19.11.8(b) Reckless

Reasons for finding as to intent:

H7 had to take deliberate actions to reach S13. The final whistle had been blown, but she nevertheless chose to react and intentionally took steps towards the player, deliberately making contact with her head.

Nature of actions - Reg 19.11.8(c)

Completed

Existence of provocation - Reg 19.11.8(d)

There was a push on a team mate, a relatively young (18) and inexperienced player, over whom H7 felt protective. However, the player accepted that this was not sufficient ground for such a disproportionate reaction.

Whether player retaliated - Reg 19.11.8(e)

It was in retaliation for a push on her team mate.

Self-defence - Reg 19.11.8(f)

This was not in self-defence of either herself or another.

Effect on victim - Reg 19.11.8(g)

Nil

Effect on match - Reg 19.11.8(h)

Nil

Vulnerability of victim - Reg 19.11.8(i)

Not vulnerable

Level of participation/premeditation - Reg 19.11.8(j)

Not pre-meditated

Conduct completed/attempted - Reg 19.11.8(k)

Complete

Other features of player's conduct - Reg 19.11.8(l)

Nil

Assessment of Seriousness Continued

Entry point

<u>Low-end</u>	<u>Weeks</u>	<u>Mid-range</u>	<u>Weeks</u>	<u>Top-end*</u>	<u>Weeks</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	

\*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 the above assessment, the Panel should consider the RFU Practice Note as set out in Appendix 5 to Regulation 19. Significant weight should be given to RFU regulation 19.11.8(a), 19.11.8(h) and 19.11.8(i).

Reasons for selecting entry point:

Entry point was primarily based on the intent of the act. Clear and deliberate act for which the lack of injury was fortuitous - it could have been worse. This was not a low end offence where recklessness or a close in grapple resulted in head contact.

Relevant Off-Field Mitgating Factors - Reg 19.11.10

<u>Acknowledgment of the commission of foul Play &amp; timing - Reg 19.11.10(a)</u>	<u>Player's disciplinary record - Reg 19.11.10(b)</u>
Immediate acknowledgement	One previous red card (Jan 21) for a high tackle. Not considered relevant to this hearing. Technical yellow card also not considered relevant.
<u>Youth and/or inexperience of player - Reg 19.11.10(c)</u>	<u>Conduct prior to and at hearing - Reg 19.11.10(d)</u>
Not inexperienced - has in fact captained the team on a couple of occasions.	Exemplary



Remorse and timing of Remorse - Reg 19.11.10(e)	Other off-field mitigation - Reg 19.11.10(f)
Remorse immediately and expressed again in the hearing.	A coach on the academy programme (explains a degree of protectiveness to the 18yr old player who was pushed). Part of the leadership team for the women's set up at Harlequins.

Number of weeks deducted: 5

Summary of reason for number of weeks deducted:
The JO considered that the conduct, remorse and record of the player merited the award of the full 50% mitigation.

Additional Relevant Off-Field Aggravating Factors - RFU Regulation 19.11.13
Player's status as an offender of the laws of the game - Reg 19.11.13 (a)
Reasonably senior
Need for deterrent to combat a pattern of offending - Reg 19.11.13(b)
Nil
Any other off-field aggravating factor that the disciplinary panel considers relevant and appropriate - (including poor conduct prior to or at the hearing) Reg 19.11.13 (c)
Nil

Number of additional weeks: 0

Games for meaningful sanctions:

09/12/23 v Exeter Chiefs  
30/12/23 v Gloucester-Hartpury Women  
06/01/24 v Leicester Tigers Women  
13/01/24 v Loughborough Lightning  
20/01/24 v Bristol Bears

Sanction

**NOTE:** PLAYER ORDERED OFF ARE PROVISIONALLY SUSPENDED PENDING THE HEARING OF THEIR CASE, SUCH SUSPENSION SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN SANCTIONING

Total sanction	5 weeks	Sending off sufficient	
Sanction commences	05/12/2023		
Sanctions concludes	22/01/2024		
Free to play	23/01/2024		
Final date to lodge appeal	08/12/2023		
Costs (please refer to Reg 19, Appendix 3 for full cost details)	£250		

Signature (JO or Chairman)	Oliver Clark	Date	06/12/2023
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**NOTE:** YOU HAVE THE RIGHT OF APPEAL AGAINST THIS DECISION AS SET OUT IN REGULATION 19.12 OF THE DISCIPLINARY REGULATIONS. YOUR ATTENTION IS SPECIFICALLY DRAWN TO THE TIME LIMIT AND DIRECTIONS/REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO AN APPEAL SET OUT IN REGULATION 19.12.9

ANY PERSON SUSPENDED UNDER THESE REGULATIONS IS REMINDED THAT UNDER RFU REGULATION 19.11.16 THE SUSPENDED PERSON MAY NOT PLAY THE GAME (OR ANY FORM THEREOF) OR BE INVOLVED IN ANY ON-FIELD MATCH DAY ACTIVITIES ANYWHERE WHICH INCLUDES (BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO) ACTING AS WATER CARRIER/ RUNNING ON A TEE ETC