

**RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION  
DISCIPLINARY HEARING**

**Constituent Body:** Yorkshire  
**Venue:** Brighouse Holiday Inn  
**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**JUDGMENT**

**Club:** Otley RUFC  
**Panel:** John Greenwood (Chairman), Paul Taylor & Richard Matthews  
**Secretary:** Brian Stott  
**Attending:** Paul Mackie – Chairman Otley RUFC  
Bev Rice – Secretary Otley RUFC  
Charlie Maunder – DOR Otley RUFC  
Jonny Rah – 2<sup>nd</sup> XV Coach  
Mickey Peel – 2<sup>nd</sup> XV Manager

**Statement of Offence:**

Otley RUFC were charged with conduct prejudicial to the interests of the Union and/or the Game, contrary to RFU Rule 5.12

**Particulars of Offence:**

Otley RUFC allowed a 16 year old, Joshua Holland (RFU ID 2380552), to represent the club in a senior 2<sup>nd</sup> XV fixture on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at Ripon RFC and to train with the team/adults.

**Panel:**  
There was no objection to the composition of the Panel

**Hearing Bundle:**

All parties had been provided with a Hearing Bundle in advance of the hearing containing the following:

- Charge Sheet
- Yorkshire RFU Notice of Hearing
- Various E Mails
- Statement from Joshua Holland
- Otley RUFC Incident Report prepared by Charlie Maunder
- Playing Adult Rugby Form (RFU Regulation 15.3.7)
- Otley RUFC Senior Playing Form

**Plea:**

Paul Mackie on behalf of Otley RUFC confirmed that the club pleaded guilty to the charge as stated

**Evidence:**

1. The Incident Report completed by Charlie Maunder contained a full chronology of the association between Otley RUFC and Joshua Holland and his involvement in training sessions on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 and his participation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV match at Ripon RFC on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
2. It is apparent that Joshua Holland (JH) turned up out of the blue at Otley RUFC on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019. He spoke to Paul Mackie (PM), the club Chairman, who told him that training was at Yarnbury RUFC. JH indicated that he had travelled by bus and didn't have any transport to get to Yarnbury.
3. PM arranged a lift for JH to get to Yarnbury. He arrived at Yarnbury approximately 20 minutes into the training session and spoke to Charlie Maunder (CM) informing CM that he was a Colt and had been training with Keighley RUFC senior side and that he preferred senior training. He trained with the senior squad that evening and again on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> January.

4. On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2019 Otley 2<sup>nd</sup> XV were playing at Ripon. JH had not been selected to play in that match but he turned up at Ripon with his kit. He spoke to the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV Team Manager, Mickey Peel (MP) who asked him what position he played and how old he was. JH told MP that he played on the wing and that he was 16 years old. He played the whole game on the wing.
5. On Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 JH again trained with the senior squad. After training he had a conversation with DOR CM during which he informed CM that he was only 16 years of age. CM told JH that he hadn't been aware that he was only 16 years old and that he couldn't train with or play for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV. JH then informed CM that he had played for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV the previous Saturday.
6. To his credit, on learning of the age of JH and the fact that he had played for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV the previous Saturday, CM reported the matter to Charlie Bowling, the clubs Junior Chairman. The circumstances were reported to the clubs Safeguarding Officer and in turn to the County's Safeguarding Officer.
7. PM made further representations on behalf of the club. He stated that there were various new club officers who were doing their best to get up to speed with the Rules and Regulations and that a genuine mistake had been made in allowing JH to train and play with senior players. Nobody involved in the process was aware of the age of JH until Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 when JH had informed MP that he was only 16 years of age. MP was unaware of the Regulation 15.6.1 and believed that a 16 year old could play senior rugby as long as he did not play in the front row. He stated that "...it was a complete mistake done in error and lack of knowledge".
8. The new club officers at the beginning of the season included Paul Mackie (Chairman), Bev Rice (Secretary), Charlie Maunder (Director of Rugby) and Richard McKennen Peters (Club Safeguarding Officer).
9. The club accepted that the systems and process for attending senior training sessions and playing senior rugby were not in place to prevent a breach of this nature, and that assumptions had been made.

**Decision:**

1. The offence was admitted by the club.
2. Whilst it was accepted that this was not a deliberate breach of Regulation 15.6.1, a club in the National Leagues playing semi professional rugby are expected to be familiar with the Rules and Regulations and ignorance is no excuse.
3. The Panel assessed this as a mid-level breach as JH had trained with the senior squad on 3 occasions and played in a senior match. Fortunately JH, who was only just 16 years of age, was not injured whilst training or playing with seniors. However, the lack of knowledge of the Regulation and/or failure to make appropriate people aware of the Regulation or consequence of breach are aggravating features.
4. The Panel did not find any mitigating factors in the offence itself, but were impressed with the "Action" that has been taken by the club to ensure there is no repetition of this breach. This is clearly set out in the Incident Report.

**Sanction:**

1. Otley RUFC 1<sup>st</sup> XV are to be deducted 8 points, 4 to be deducted immediately and 4 suspended until the end of the season and not to be activated unless the club commits a like offence.
2. Director of Rugby Charlie Maunder and 2<sup>nd</sup> XV Coach Jonny Rah be banned from any coaching and matchday activity for two months, such ban to be suspended until the end of the season and not to be activated unless the club and/or DOR/Coach commit a like offence.
3. Otley 2<sup>nd</sup> XV be banned from entering the Aire Wharfe Cup for the 2018/19 season.

**Costs:**

Pursuant to RFU Regulation 19, Appendix 3, the Panel makes an award of £200 costs against Otley RUFC.

**Right of Appeal:**

There is a right of appeal against this decision. Any such appeal must be lodged with the RFU Head of Discipline by 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**Signed:** John Greenwood  
Chairman

12<sup>th</sup> March 2019