

# **RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION DISCIPLINARY HEARING**

Constituent Body: Nottingham Lincolnshire & Derbyshire RFU

Venue: NEWARK RFC

Date: 12/08/2021

## **JUDGMENT**

Club: SKEGNESS RFC

Match: SKEGNESS RFC V DEEPINGS RFC.

Match Date 1/5/2021

Match Venue: SKEGNESS RFC

Panel: Tim Bembridge (Chairman) Michael Hilton, Ian Roe

Secretary: Andrew Statham

Attending: James Cook Skegness RFC Chairman

Observing: Russ Boyack (NLD discipline panel)

## **Preliminary Matters**

The panel introduced themselves with Russ Boyack observing. Mr Cook was specifically asked if he objected to the formation of the panel and/ or its members.

## **Charge and Plea**

### **Charge**

Conduct prejudicial to the Union or the conduct of the game contrary to Rule 5.12 of the RFU Rules.

The club pleaded guilty to the charge

# Particulars of Offence

In a match between Skegness XV and Deeping XV played on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021, Skegness RFC knowingly fielded a 17 year old player in a senior game contrary to the RFU ruling suspending the ability of correctly assessed U17's from playing in the senior game until the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022

We undertook an assessment of the Clubs conduct:-

- a) This was a serious and deliberate/Intentional act of allowing a minor (17 year old) to play full contact adult rugby. It could be reasonably considered this is against the children's act 2004 and certainly the player was a minor at the time of the game.
- b) To make the incident worse this was discussed with the player, coach and captain. It resulted in a flagrant act to play the minor against all RFU regulations.
- c) No proof could be given by the club that any RFU 17 year old playing adult rugby process or paperwork had been submitted or even completed. indeed had process been followed the NLD safeguarding officer would have declined permission due to the modified RFU regulation
- d) Mr Cook apologised and explained he was the only person available to attend the hearing and that one member who was scheduled to attend had only today been "pinged" by the Covid app and had to isolate.
- e) The panel sympathised with Mr Cook but stressed the serious nature of the act and the possible consequences should any injury to the minor have happened.

## Aggravating Features

9. We considered there were no aggravating factors in this case, should any injury have taken place this would have not been the case.

## Mitigating Factors

10. We considered there were no mitigating factors in this case.

## **Decision**

1. The Panel found Skegness RFC guilty of the 5-12 charge
- 2.

## **Sanction**

The panel decide the sanction would be 2 fold

The panel has requested that the NLD safeguarding officer will do an audit of the clubs procedures

The panel has imposed a 10 league point deduction for the clubs first team in the Midlands 4 East league

This points deduction will be suspended for this forthcoming season and will be enforced should a repeat offence take place.

## **Costs**

12. standard £30-00 costs will be invoiced separately.

## **Right of Appeal**

13. There is a right of appeal against this decision. Any such appeal must be lodged with the RFU Head of Discipline by 28 days from receipt of this judgement.