SUOMEN RUGBYLIITTO
FINNISH RUGBY FEDERATION

DECISION FORM

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE			
Player's Name	Thomas Finell		
Player's Club	Helsinki Warriors Rugby Club		
Match	Warriors Rugby Club vs Tallinn Kalev Rugby Club		
Competition	Men's Finnish Championship		
Date of match	9 August 2025		
Match Venue	Myllypuro, Helsinki		
Rules to apply	2025 SRL Competition Regulations & World Rugby Regulation 17		
Referee Name	Alessandro Begnoni	**Plea**	☐ Admitted ☒ Not admitted
Offence	Punch or strike contrary to Law 9.12	☐ Red card ☒ Citing ☐ Other If "Other" selected, please specify:	

PANEL DETAILS			
Hearing date	On papers	**Hearing venue**	Via Slack
Chairperson/JO	Palemia Field		
Other Members of the Disciplinary Panel	George Mossford Stephan Whittaker		
List of documents / materials provided to Player in advance of hearing	1. Intention to cite email from Kalev dated 10 August 2025 2. Video stream link from YouTube 3. Statement from The Player		

SUMMARY OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CITING/REFEREE'S REPORT/INCIDENT FOOTAGE

The Disciplinary Officer received the report from Kalev Rugby Club:

> *Player #10 punched deliberately Kalev player #6 in the genitals. This is clear bad sportsmanship and physical abuse.*

Video footage was provided by Kalev Rugby Club via YouTube link. As per Regulation 17 requirements, audio was removed from the video clips (ie no referee audio link was available) and this was also made available to the Disciplinary Panel.

As part of the procedure in receiving the citing request and prior to convening the Panel, the SRL Disciplinary Officer consulted with the Match Officials, and it was confirmed that this event was

undetected by them. Therefore, he was permitted to proceed with the formation of the panel and sourcing evidence from both clubs.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF OTHER EVIDENCE (e.g., medical reports)

No other evidence provided

SUMMARY OF PLAYER'S EVIDENCE

The Player's and his Club submitted the following

This is my personal statement in response to the citation regarding an alleged punch to the genitals of player #6. I would like to present my account of the incident and respectfully direct your attention to the accompanying video footage, which I believe offers essential context.

During the breakdown, I was contesting the ball in a jackal position when player #6 made direct contact with my head, then grabbed my neck and applied force. My cited action, described as a punch, was a reflexive attempt to push him away in order to release his grip around my neck and prevent further injury. At no point did I intend to strike him in the groin. My response was instinctive and aimed at protecting myself in what I perceived to be a dangerous and escalating situation.

The footage further shows that following this initial contact, player #6 delivered a punch and a knee to my head. These actions indicate a clear intent to engage in foul play and reinforce my position that my response was defensive in nature.

I regret that the situation escalated, but I firmly believe my actions were a direct and proportionate reaction to player #6's illegal and aggressive conduct. I urge the committee to review the video footage thoroughly, as it clearly demonstrates that I was not the instigator and that my actions were justified under the circumstances.

I also want to emphasize that my conduct was in no way intended to violate the spirit of good sportsmanship. I hold the values of rugby in highest regard, and I deeply regret that this incident has raised concerns.

Thank you for your time.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Panel was reminded that the onus is on Kalev Rugby to provide the evidence in support of the citing and that the standard of proof for disciplinary matters is on the balance of probabilities. As The Player both denied that there was any Foul Play (and therefore no incident reaching the Red Card threshold). The Panel proceeded with determining the findings of fact.

The Panel was provided with the citing report from Kalev Rugby Club, video footage from a link provided by Kalev Rugby Club, and The Player's written statement.

Kalev are in possession 15m into the Warriors (WRC) half. Kalev 15 receives the ball and is tackled by The Player and goes to ground. The Player releases the tackler and attempts to jackal the ball. Kalev 6 enters the tackle area in a clear out attempt on The Player which is initially has the bulk of the force shoulder to shoulder, but his left forearm pushes down on the back of The Player's neck.

As The Player is then pushed back towards his own side of the breakdown by Kalev 6 who moves into an upright position, the Kalev player's torso pushes The Players head to one side and The Player loses grip of the Kalev player on the ground. Kalev 6 is still attempting to twist The Player out of the breakdown as the WRC player loses his grip, and at this point his arm swings back and goes forward. Simultaneously with the forward momentum, Kalev 6 makes a sudden increase in height that sees him almost on the back of The Player changing the dynamics of the clear out.

After the alleged strike, Kalev 6 is in obvious discomfort and attempts to get the attention of the referee. The referee then stops the game because of concerns of the welfare of the original ball carrier and doesn't appear to have noticed the foul play.

We determine the following on the balance of probabilities:

1. WRC 10 (The Player) was in a legal position to jackal the ball
2. Kalev 6 attempted to clear out, and was legally justified in doing so, WRC 10
3. WRC 10 lost the contact and to get loose of the Kalev clear out, swung his arm out to either strike or punch the Kalev player.
4. The breakdown competition above the ball that WRC 10 had attempted to jackal, suddenly disintegrated resulting in a change in height of Kalev 6 suddenly which resulted in WRC 10 contacting his groin area.
5. The Panel doesn't believe that The Player deliberately targeted the groin, but contact was still made.

Having considered other law applications (namely 9.27) and consulting with another European and World Rugby disciplinary colleague, in this case we don't believe that this incident is contrary to Law 9.27 and find that The Player committed Foul Play contrary to Law 9.12 (Striking or Punching) and that it reaches the red card threshold.

On this finding of facts, The Panel is satisfied that The Player recklessly lashed out which resulted in the strike on the opponent's groin.

DECISION

☒ Proven ☐ Not proven ☐ Other disposal (please state)

SANCTIONING PROCESS

ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS As per Article 1.5 of SRL Competition Regulations and Regulations 17 of World Rugby		
Assessment of Intent		
☐ Intentional/deliberate ☒ Reckless		
State Reasons		
The Player is bent over because of a clear out from a Kalev player. The Player knew, or should have known, that lashing out carried a risk of committing an act of Foul Play		
Gravity of player's actions		
While the potential was serious, the actual delivery was of a low enough force that the Kalev player was able to immediately continue without medical attention		
Nature of actions		
Contact was made with the opposition groin which is a protected area under the Laws.		
Existence of provocation		
The Kalev player had placed his forearm with force on the back of The Player's neck rendering him in a potentially vulnerable situation.		
Whether player retaliated		
See existence of provocation		
Self-defence		
See existence of provocation		
Effect on victim		
Immediate discomfort but was able to continue play after the stoppage that followed the incident for an unrelated issue.		
Effect on match		
Minimal effect		
Vulnerability of victim		
See existence of provocation		
Level of participation/premeditation		
None		
Conduct completed/attempted		
Completed		
Other features of player's conduct		
None		
Entry point		
☐ Top end **[6+]** Weeks	☒ Mid-range **[4]** Weeks	☐ Low-end **[2]** Weeks

***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.

Reasons for selecting Entry Point above Top End
N/A

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RELEVANT OFF-FIELD MITIGATING FACTORS As per Article 1.5 of SRL Competition Regulations and Regulations 17 of World Rugby	
Acknowledgement of guilt and timing	**Player's disciplinary record/good character**
No acknowledgement	Player has received the following yellow cards: 2/9/2023 Contrary to 9.10 9/7/2022 Contrary to 9.25 17/8/2019 Contrary to 9.13 Red cards issued: 20/5/2017 Contrary to 10.3(b) "dangerous tackling"
Youth and inexperience of player	**Conduct prior to and at hearing**
Not applicable. The Player is the most capped member of the Finnish National Team	Provided evidence in support of defence that related to the specific citing.
Remorse and timing of remorse	**Other off-field mitigation**
Regret was expressed in The Player's statement. This differs from a red card scenario.	Not applicable

Number of weeks deducted: 1

Summary of reason for number of weeks deducted:
The Player presented his argument openly. Although he has disciplinary issues, particularly a red card in 2017, it would be unfair to hold this against him indefinitely. However, he cannot receive a full discount due to contesting the citing, and he has received several yellow cards for Foul Play since the red card, with his most recent being a "technical offence". The panel also recognises that although there was no foul play by Kalev #6, that player's actions did result in contact with The Player's head which may have caused some disorientation and may have led to him perceiving himself to be in a potentially dangerous situation. A one-week reduction is therefore imposed.

ADDITIONAL RELEVANT OFF-FIELD AGGRAVATING FACTORS As per Article 1.5 of SRL Competition 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:
N/A

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 – As per SRL Competition Regulations and (or equivalent Tournament rule)

Total sanction	Three (3) weeks	☐ Sending off sufficient
Sanction commences		Immediately
Sanction concludes		7 September 2025
Matches/tournaments included in sanction		For the avoidance of doubts please note that the sanction must be understood as three weeks where at least one meaningful match was to be played by the player. Based on the information supplied by his club, The Player is suspended for the following matches: 16 August 2025 vs Helsinki Rugby Club 30 August 2025 vs Porvoo OTS 6 September 2025 vs Turku Eagles

Costs	N/A

Date	15 August 2025
Signature (JO or Chairman)	

NOTE: You have 48 hours from notification of the decision of the chairman/jo to lodge an appeal with the tournament director – SRL Competitions Regulation 5.5.1 (or equivalent Tournament rule)