

# DISCIPLINARY DECISION



Match	Lethbridge Rugby Club at Calgary Canucks		
Competition	MDEV		
Date of match	June 17, 2022	Match venue	Calgary Rugby Park
Rules to apply	Regulation 17 World Rugby Handbook;		

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE			
Player's surname	Navitkula	Date of birth	
Forename(s)	Mesake		
Player's Club	Lethbridge Rugby Club		
Referee Name	Connar Coonan	Plea	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Admitted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Admitted
Offence	9.12 A Player must not physically abuse anyone	SELECT: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Red Card <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citing <input type="checkbox"/> Other If "Other" selected, please specify:	
Summary of Sanction			

HEARING DETAILS			
Hearing date	July 4, 2023	Hearing venue	Calgary, Alberta by desktop
Chairman/DO	John McDonald		
Other Members of Disciplinary Committee			
Appearance Player	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	Appearance Club	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
Player's Representative(s)			
List of documents/materials provided to Player in advance of hearing	Sending off report Citing Report Video footage		

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

I received a match official's sending off report:

Player 23 from Lethbridge was sent off under Law 9(12) for Dangerous Play – physical abuse (punching) In the primary incident, MO had followed play down field with Canucks attacking. Upon turning around, MO saw a large group of players were congregated and involved in fighting. Other fighting was going on behind this incident. MO called the ball dead and observed players in scuffles. The incident was calming and captains gathered with MO to discuss the factors. With confusion on players directly involved, and obstructed view of the primary incident, MO was not able to identify specific players to admonish. In the secondary incident involving Player 23 from Lethbridge (named by captain as Mesake Navitkulae) while the ball was dead and MO was conferring with captains, Player 23 from Lethbridge ran into a group of players and began repeatedly punching a Canucks player. Player 23 did not stop with attempts at verbal or physical restraint. The ball had been dead for 1-2min and the primary incident had calmed. Details on the primary incident in which Player 23 and Player 1 were directly involved: MO did not directly observe the incident start. It was reported to MO the incident is on video and witnesses to the incident were able to identify Player 1 who struck a Canucks player causing unconsciousness and EMS transport. During the game Player 1 was involved in obstructive play and the earlier scuffle. He had already caused two penalties against Lethbridge. MO had warned Player 1 and Lethbridge captain that Player 1 would be sent off if he caused another penalty. MO observed the struck player dazed and confused on the ground at the time and in the vicinity of where Player 23 was fighting in the second incident.”

I received a Citing Report from the Calgary Canucks:

“The Canucks submit the following citations to the Calgary Rugby Union in relation to a match between the Lethbridge Rugby Club and the Canucks on June 17<sup>th</sup> 2023.

At minute 57:26 L23 who we understand to be Mesake Navitkula punches a Canucks player in the head.



At minute 1:00:16 L23 punches C23 in the back of the head after C23 is thrown to the ground by L7



At minutes 1:00:50 After the referee and captains have calmed things down L23 approaches C23 in a boxer's stance and punches C23 in the face causing injuries which required stitches.





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

C23 received emergency medical attention and required some stitches

#### SUMMARY OF PLAYER'S EVIDENCE

I received the following statement from Ryan McKeown, player coach of the Lethbridge Rugby Club.

“Hey Rory, here are my refined comments, feel free to copy and paste and send to whoever is involved in the process. As a player, coach, volunteer, long term rugby supporter.. the last several years of sportsmanship decline have made me very much frustrated with the state of rugby in our area. Rugby isn't even at the heart of our competition these days, dropping players to lower divisions to win is more important than developing, instigating conflicts to have players removed from the game for retaliating is more important than beating that player in rugby.

My comments below include timestamps in the video provided and while i am completely opposed to punching and foul play of sorts in rugby, most of our players lose control and they are doing it in reaction to things happening to them on field. Right or wrong, almost everything i saw was reactionary and while i express self control to our players weekly, i can at least view these citations knowing our players were mostly provoked into conflict and unfortunately took the bait and lost the spirit of rugby on the way - again most of these instances i would react badly to as well, but i have yet to throw a punch in my rugby career and will hopefully retire before it happens.

Before i start, i want to express how apprehensive i was friday when i checked who our ref was. I knew it was going to be a chippy game that got out of control because that referee does not deescalate situations when required. Every memory i have with him reffing is a bad one which is unfortunate cause i do think he is a decent guy, but our refs need to control games and while he refs most aspects of the game well, i do feel his vision is one sided on occasion and he doesnt know how to take control of a game - wish it wasnt necessary but it is. Every team says the same thing - play to the ref - and that is our way of dealing with all the different reffing styles we see. Unfortunately - if the ref isnt willing to reign in chippy and foul play, it will get worse and worse because that is how people operate. Miss all the knock-ons and forward passes you want, but when issues (safety or potential for escalation) are

brought to your attention you need to make a point of it by throwing early cards or threatening to do so if it is brought to your attention and you don't see it. " i didnt see anything" is a terrible way to respond when both captains and myself acknowledge multiple punches being [thrown.in](#) the first half - the second half is a product of that missed opportunity to make an example and take control of the game.

In recent years i have asked referees to throw a yellow at both teams or even just ours if i saw something and they didn't. Playing as a captain i have kicked my own players off the field either by having them carded or benched for any sort of instigative behavior or punches thrown if the ref happened to miss them.

Every person who threw punches and instigated throughout the game in various ways was responsible for the end result. I said this to the Canucks 2 and 3 in front of our captain and ref after the game and was met with "why are you even on the field, get the fuck out of here" while their 3 was walking towards me trying to intimidate me. I am a calm person and i am not afraid of someone barking at me, but that type of instigative behavior leads to all this garbage that ruins the game.

They said their player was "sucker punched and it isn't ok" to which i responded every punch is a sucker a punch because punching isnt a part of the game - when i said punching anyone at any point in rugby isnt good, one responded with thats hard rugby (this is the number 2, whose idea of hard rugby is instigating conflict in rucks, head blows in rucks, stomping players and attacking defenceless players.... the other canuck (#3) responded as i mentioned above. I don't disagree that someone was sucker punched, but the same guy who was mad that they were sucker punched, is the same guy that threw multiple uppercuts to our player with his jersey over his head - luckily the video saw this otherwise Lethbridge would look wrong in every aspect.

All i ask is that the Canucks organization share their blame in what happened. A few of our players throwing punches isnt something i will defend, but i can tell you people are more likely to do that when punches ARE NOT dealt with earlier in the game when it is brought to the referee's attention., When players receive cheap shots and they feel the referee is not protecting them, they will protect themselves and each other.

some timestamps from the video and what happened and you can see that while Lethbridge players threw punches and should be responsible for that, we need to address instigative behavior or these things will continue. As it stands, many people got away with cheap shots and punches, some of which are on camera and that isn't ok.

As Rory has said, some players are targeted consistently and when they take shot after shot they will eventually lash out. Our 23 has been targeted with provocation throughout the season one of which is documented in a red card citing earlier in the year - this IS a pattern - some players are being targeted with cheap play and provocations to have them react and sent off.

We had two tries called back which obviously adds to tempers flaring whether they are legitimate or not. It just adds to the feeling that our players were not being protected and that is when people protect themselves or just flat out snap.

20:02 - laying on the ground in the try zone after injuring my ankle (high ankle sprain so 3-8 weeks if i feel like playing again this year), their player goes to rip me up from the ground by the neck of my jersey in front of the ref and the ref doesn't say a damn thing. Technically he is grabbing me high? the play is dead? maybe grabbing an injured player off the ground isn't a good idea? I get it, he may not have broken any actual rugby law but those actions are inflammatory in nature. in any case i came out of the game pretty much right after. I knew 100% at the moment the game was going to go off the rails though.

- this is an extreme sore spot for me because after seeing instances of players stamped throughout the game, the injury i suffered is likely from having my heel stomped while i was on my stomach.. looked at the video and couldnt make sense of how i hurt it. i tried to go through what happened to figure it out but while i was thinking i was pulled off the ground.

- to the right of this our 13 is seen punching or maybe aggressively palming their #2 in the back head/neck area. while i won't defend that too much, you can clearly see the number 2 canuck was holding onto our player and had his arm around the back of his neck so he is instigating this conflict. punching isnt the answer, but the C2 was instigating at the bottom of the ruck and you will see throughout the video multiple instances of him doing that sort of stuff. (he referred to that sort of stuff as "hard" rugby after the game)

34:10 - our 23 (red carded at the end for all the punching) - is laying defenseless in the ruck. the canucks #2 comes in with a clear intentional shot to the top of his head. Instigative and inflammatory in nature - also illegal, and i get it the ref didn't see it - but their number 2 holds a lot of the blame for this game going off the rails for this one and later in the game. the second time this game that player looked to be instigating conflict in a ruck.

- this is also a sore spot because players will be red carded and suspended for throwing punches. this incident here is far worse than a punch. it is direct deliberate blow to the top of the head of a DEFENCELESS player which is risking head and neck injury. this is as illegal as a punch, and definitely with serious intent to injure a player - that type of play has zero place in rugby, and i will be extremely disappointed if it is left unaddressed and unpunished - neck injuries are a fear we all take playing this game, but intentional foul play like this is BS.

37:55 - our player is on the ground with the ball - nothing illegal here, but their player gets on top and pulls the ball away even though it is our ball - once again these actions are inflammatory.

43:05 - the canucks number 2 uppercuts our player a handful of times with his jersey over his head - luckily the camera saw this. player is defenseless

At this point the referee either saw, ignored, or missed 4 instances of varying degrees that are by nature instigations or straight up strikes against our players. I thanked our players after the game for keeping their cool up until this point but it was also clear that the referee was not going to protect any of our players and unfortunately i knew the game was going to come off the rails if the ref didnt sort it out.

I brought the punches to his attention and was met with crickets even though both captains agreed on what happened. "I didnt see anything" just acknowledges that the ref isnt seeing the foul play and doesnt care to address it so of course it will escalate.

57:25 - looks like our player gets tipped a bit and he goes to throw a punch and misses after he took exception to a tackle. Not going to defend this, he lost his temper but at this point no punches were dealt with previously and he took a defenceless head shot in a ruck earlier, so i wasn't shocked when watching the video to see him come unglued.

1:00:15 - canuck player tosses our player from a ruck after the play by his head/neck area and our 23 comes to defend by immediately throwing a punch and then they both get up and swing at each other.

- shortly after our 23 circles back to their 23 and they square off again.

- the C23 throwing our player to the ground by his head/neck is what starts this conflict and our guys are at a point where they are reacting instantly and not thinking because nothing had been dealt with thus far.

1:01:00 or so - our 23 squares up with their 23 for more punches - i am upset with our player for

circling around and i really wish both 23 had went opposite directions and instead of moving parallel to keep in eye sight of each other.

- our number 1 strikes one of their players who is standing overtop of our 23 who is on the ground. From the video we can clearly see that while there are several canuck players over top, they weren't doing anything malicious at that time (punches shortly before) - but with everything that had happened throughout the game and in the moments leading up - our player sees his teammate on the ground with 3 players overtop in the vicinity and felt the need to defend him. Once again i am not defending what happened, only stating that our players didn't randomly start throwing punches.

- their number 2 stamps our player who is in the ground.

i am disappointed in how our players reacted at the end of the day, but much of what happened at the end of the game was a direct result of instigations and inflammatory behavior left unchecked by the referee. i have spoken to many players so far and reiterated that they need to do their best to maintain composure, but when i say that i am telling them to rely on the referee to do their job and keep control of the situation and keep them safe - but when their concerns are ignored i dont even know how to respond anymore.

something that doesnt show up on the camera, but there are many things players do to get into the heads of other players in games. our 1 was being choked with his jersey in scrums which is something i havent seen since i propped in 05-06. I don't think it is illegal, but it is absolutely infuriating and is once again one thing that adds to games getting out of hand. When our 1 asked their 3 to cut it out and just play rugby, he was met with "learn to play rugby and quit bitching" - I am sorry but this is absolutely outside the spirit of rugby. That was our #1 first start as a prop in mens rugby, and a veteran player stooping to insults and dirty tricks is BS. an example i look back to.. twice i have had brand new props playing at the CRU and they are usually met with good opposition who help them learn rather than hinder them.

Peter Rowe taught two of our new props how to front row a few years ago when they were playing their first game of mens - thanked him after the game for keeping the spirit of rugby alive. Bow Valley had 1s players travelling to Lethbridge with their 3s team years ago... instead of being pricks and putting down our new players, their 1st div props were helping ours learn how to play in the front row. Once again i thanked them for that - that sort of behaviour keeps me in rugby, but the stuff mentioned above has me questioning if i even want to push players into this sport anymore.

once again to paint Lethbridge as a team that was looking for a scrap isn't fair given what i mentioned above. players on both sides were pushed and went too far with little to no attempts to reign in bad behaviour. moments where the game could have been taken into control were ignored by the referee, or maybe he just figured things would settle down, not really sure. every ref has a certain style, and he prefers to let the players sort things out, and we saw how that ended.

appreciate everyone taking time to look through these citations and the video, but i think many players and clubs need a reminder that if we lose the spirit of rugby then our union will disappear. the players who want to throw cheap shots and instigate (our players included) need to be dealt with and clubs should handle them internally when referees miss those things... classifying foul play as hard rugby is a brutal way to look at the game.

the unfortunate thing is this type of behaviour used to be sorted on field... if you pissed someone off and they threw a punch.. it was a yellow card and you couldnt hide from them like you can now. some players look to instigate, get a player sent off and laugh about it afterwards..that's probably why i never threw punches, the other guy would be back in 10 minutes to sort me out if i did something dirty but nowadays foul play is a tool to gain an advantage through retaliation., “



I received the following submissions from the President of the Lethbridge Rugby Club.

LRC Vs Canucks Mess:

We acknowledge that Mess threw punches but giving context:

First incident: Mess was running with the ball, made a pass and was tackled at the knee, was tipped in contact (due to momentum) and landed on his head/upper body, Mess felt it was done on purpose and late, the player was laughing at him, Mess lashed out and threw one punch.

Second incident: Rams number 23 late, aggressively tackles a Lethbridge player off the ball on the side of the ruck while the ball has already been passed and is multiple metres away, Mess hits this player, who then hits Mess back and the players exchange multiple punches.

Third incident: Mess hears what he believes is a racial slur directed at him by the Rams 23 and approaches, him and they exchange punches again with both players ending up on the ground.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT

I have reviewed the red card report, the Citing Report and the Players/Club's submissions/representations, and the video evidence <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pu5cxtSQblk>.

All affected parties were given an opportunity to give oral evidence but have chosen to provide written submissions only. I am satisfied that I can fairly adjudicate the matter on the basis of written submissions/representations and a review of the footage, which was conducted with the sound off as recommended by World Rugby Regulation 17.

I am not required to find that a thing did or did not happen to the Criminal Standard of beyond a reasonable doubt, as with all administrative tribunals the burden of proof standard is the Balance of Probabilities, that means that based on the preponderance of evidence, I must be more convinced than not that a thing happened, or did not.

I find that Mesake Navitkula did Physically abuse 2 players in 3 incidents contrary to Law 9.12 A player shall not physically abuse anyone.

. In the Instances before us which I will refer to by time stamp for ease, 2 of these were in the direct view of the match official, and were reported in his sending off report. I find that these citings, while unnecessary, corroborated the Sending Off Report and were nonetheless helpful, the first instance occurred well behind the ruck, and well after the ball had left and were in fact out of the view of the referee.

57:26 it is the Player's/LRC position that Mr. Navitkula was "tip tackled" and the Canucks player laughed at him. Having reviewed the video footage, represented as stills below, I am not satisfied that a "tip tackle occurred" it is my finding, based on the video footage that the Canucks player initiated contact with Mr. Navitkula's lower body, it appears to me that a combination of momentum, gravity, and a desire to "go to ground" caused a situation where Mr. Navitkula's shoulder dipped below the hip line. To assess further it must be noted that Mr. Navitkula was not lifted off the ground and driven into the ground as required under law 9.13. I cannot find the Player was provoked in any manner.





It is also LRC's position that Mr. Navitkula does not connect his punch.



When watching the video it becomes clear that the Canucks player's head is clearly moved left to right in concert with the fist of Mr. Navitkula, I am convinced on the balance of probability that Mr. Navitkula connected his punch, I further find that the intended point of contact of that punch was in fact the head.

1:00:15 - It is LRC's position that a canuck player tosses a LRC player from a ruck after the play by his

head/neck area and L23 comes to defend by immediately throwing a punch and then they both get up and swing at each other.

I find that is not the case. After a review of the video I am convinced on the balance of probability that C23 formed a ruck by way of a tackle and was then bound to L7, when the ruck breaks up L7 violently throws C23 to the ground, and while in a vulnerable position, attempting to regain his feet, he is punched directly to the head by L23 which sparks off what I will call the first melee.





It is LRC position that following the break-up of the first melee, that L23 circled back and punched C23 again. The club is disappointed in the circling back. The player submits that C23 uttered a racial slur. This matter was decided in 2023 CRU 09. I will deal with the two separately.

As I found in 2023 CRU 09 I find it difficult to reconcile L23 statement with the fact that, at that time, the MO, and +/- 30 players were between Mr. Navitkula including the MO and not one other player, nor the MO can recall any racial slur being uttered. As a result I cannot support that allegation and Find the C23 did not make racial utterances. I find in fact the opposite. As Mr. Navitkula circles around behind the match official he adopts a “boxers” stance and takes 3 steps before striking C23 in the head. C23 can clearly be seen attempting to fend off the last attack by extending his arm.





**DECISION**

*Relevant Laws:*

The player was ordered off and Cited by the Canucks under law 9.12 Which states:  
 Law 9.12 A player must not physically or verbally abuse anyone physical abuse includes, but is not limited to, biting, punching, contact with the eye or the eye area, striking with any part of the arm, shoulder, head or knees, stamping, trampling, tripping or kicking.

I find that the Player physically abused opposition players by punching said players in the head on several occasions as set out above in the findings of fact.

On the balance probabilities the Player has failed to prove that the match official was wrong in ordering off the Player.

For the reasons set out Above and the findings of fact above the Citations made by the Calgary Canucks against the Player are upheld.

<input type="checkbox"/> Breach admitted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proven	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Proven	<input type="checkbox"/> Other disposal (please state)
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**SANCTIONING PROCESS**

**ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS**

Assessment of Intent – R 17.18.1(a)-(b) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intentional	<input type="checkbox"/> Reckless
State Reasons	

<p>Incident 1 There was no rugby reason for the player to punch the Canucks player  Incident 2 There was no rugby reason for the player to punch C23  Incident 3 There was no rugby reason for the player to again punch C23</p>
<p>Nature of actions – R 17.18.1(c) (or equivalent Tournament rule)</p> <p>When taken together these are serious acts of foul play, committed intentionally with the Player’s Right fist and making contact with:  Incident 1: the left jaw of the Canucks Player, the blow was delivered with force causing the victim player’s head to twist violently sideways.  Incident 2: the left jaw of the victim player (C23) the blow was delivered with force causing the player’s head to turn or twist violently, the blow was delivered while the victim player was in a vulnerable position and could not have seen or expected the blow.  Incident 3: the left jaw of the victim player with force causing the victim player’s head to jerk backwards.</p>
<p>Existence of provocation – R 17.18.1(d) (or equivalent Tournament rule)</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that L23 was provoked in any manner.</p>
<p>Whether player retaliated – R 17.18.1(e) (or equivalent Tournament rule)</p> <p>While there is some allegation that L23 retaliated in incident #2, I have given reasons why I am not persuaded that is in fact the case, and as such cannot find that L23 was acting in a retaliatory manner. In fact I find that L23 was the aggressor in all three instances.</p>
<p>Self-defence – R 17.18.1(f) (or equivalent Tournament rule)</p> <p>L23 was not at any time acting in defence of himself despite representations to the contrary, the video evidence is clear in that in all three cited/reported incidents L23 was the aggressor.</p>
<p>Effect on victim – R 17.18.1(g) (or equivalent Tournament rule)</p> <p>In the third incident C23 required emergency medical intervention and received a number of stitches.</p>
<p>Effect on match – R 17.18.1(h) (or equivalent Tournament rule)</p> <p>Following the third incident the MO, and both team captains agreed to end the game as a result of the on filed violence of which I find that L23 was the primary culprit. The match ended some 20 minutes into the second half.</p>
<p>Vulnerability of victim – R 17.18.1(i) (or equivalent Tournament rule)</p> <p>Incident 1. The victim player clearly saw the punch coming and attempted to defend himself in some manner, and the level of vulnerability is assessed as low.  Incident 2. C23 was on the ground attempting to regain his feet when he was punched, he had no prior indication the punch was coming and as a result I find he was highly vulnerable.  Incident 3. C23 had a clear indication, based on L23 body language that a punch was or was likely coming and extended his arm in an attempt to protect himself, the level of vulnerability is assessed as low.</p>
<p>Level of participation/premeditation – R 17.18.1(j) (or equivalent Tournament rule)</p> <p>Incident 1. This was premeditated, while it occurred a few seconds after the alleged but not supported tip tackle L23 attacked the Canucks player out of anger or frustration and as such was premeditated.  Incident 2. L23 was not involved in the incident between L7 and C23 and very clearly attacked C23 while he was on the ground, this was premeditated.  Incident 3. L23 very clearly intended to punch C23 and such is supported by his body language, deliberate path to C23 around the MO, and adopting a fighting stance, this act was highly premeditated.</p>
<p>Conduct completed/attempted – R 17.18.1(k) (or equivalent Tournament rule)</p> <p>Completed</p>
<p>Other features of player’s conduct – R 17.18.1(l) (or equivalent Tournament rule)</p>

**ASSESSMENT OF SERIOUSNESS CONTINUED**

Entry point



<u>Top end*</u>	<u>Weeks/Matches</u>	<u>Mid-range</u>	<u>Weeks/Matches</u>	<u>Low-end</u>	<u>Weeks/Matches</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>20</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Click Here For #</a>	<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 this assessment, the JO/Committee should consider World Rugby Regulations 17.18.1(a), 17.18.1(g), and 17.18.1(h) or the equivalent provisions within the Tournament Rules referred to above.

Reasons for selecting Entry Point above Top End
<p>An entry point of 20 weeks (expressed as matches) is required under the circumstances for the reasons which follow the high-end entry point of 10 matches is entirely unsuitable.</p> <p>As all three punches were to the head of the victim players, the lowest possible entry point pursuant to Regulation 17 is the mid-range of 6 weeks which is wholly unsuitable.</p> <p>This was an accumulation of admitted breaches of striking with significant force and in at least one case the victim player was in a vulnerable position and unable to protect himself. As this involves a number of instances of foul play, and at least once case where the victim player required emergency medical attention and received a number of stitches an entry point above the top end and below the maximum is warranted</p>

### RELEVANT OFF-FIELD MITIGATING FACTORS

Acknowledgement of guilt and timing – R 17.19.1(a) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	Player’s disciplinary record – R 17.19.1(b) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
The player admits that he struck the affected players, however he has offered excuses for his actions which are unrelated to these particular incidents, and are more related to the overall conduct of the match.	The player was in fact playing in this match notwithstanding another discipline hearing was underway. These factors militate against mitigation in this case.
Youth and/or inexperience of player – R 17.19.1(c) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	Conduct prior to and at hearing – R 17.19.1(d) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
The player is an experienced rugby player having played in multiple jurisdictions throughout the world as a result I do not find any mitigation based on youth or inexperience.	The player advised that he did not wish an in person hearing and to proceed on a desktop basis. His conduct prior to the Hearing was appropriate but for the fact that there is evidence that while serving a temporary suspension from a sending off where a hearing had not been held Mr Navitkula played in another match notwithstanding his temporary suspension. This is another factor militating against mitigation in this case.
Remorse and timing of remorse – R 17.19.1(e) (or equivalent Tournament rule)	Other off-field mitigation – R 17.19.1(f) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
The player has exhibited no remorse with respect to this event and I cannot mitigate based on same.	None

Number of weeks /matches deducted: 0

Summary of reason for number of weeks/matches deducted:  
 The player hesitantly admits responsibility for his wrongdoing but offers no remorse and instead attempts to put the blame on the Match Official and other players conduct to justify what are otherwise brutal attacks which have no place in the game. No mitigation can be found under the circumstances.

### ADDITIONAL RELEVANT OFF-FIELD AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Player’s status as an offender of the Laws of the Game – R 17.20.1(a) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
The player has a sanction flowing from a match in 2019 in which he was sent off under Law 9.18 for lifting a player so that his hips were above his shoulders and driving him into the ground. He has a a recent sanction flowing from an earlier match this season under Law 9.12 in which he continued to play notwithstanding that matter had not yet been disposed of and was under a temporary suspension.
Need for deterrence – R 17.20.1(b) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
N/A
Any other off-field aggravating factors – R 17.20.1(c) (or equivalent Tournament rule)
The player knowing that he had been shown a red card and had been sent off while temporarily suspended played in another sanctioned match.

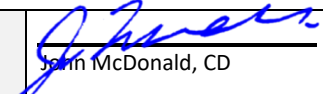
Number of additional weeks/matches: 3

**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 – R 17.12.5(f) / 17.13.7 (or equivalent Tournament rule)

Total sanction	23 Games	<input type="checkbox"/> Sending off sufficient
Sanction commences	July 23, 2023	
Sanction concludes	December 31, 2028 or such earlier date as ordered by the Judicial Officer after provision of satisfactory evidence from the Player of 23 qualifying games under Regulation 17.21 for this Sanction and 2 games under his sanction in 2023 CRU 11 has concluded	
Matches/tournaments included in sanction	The Player is to provide evidence as per Regulation 17.21	

Costs	N/A
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Signature (DO or Chairman)	 John McDonald, CD	Date	July 11, 2023
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**NOTE:** Should the Player or the club wish to appeal this sanction they may do so in accordance with the Rugby Alberta Appeals Policy found here [https://sportlomo-userupload.s3.amazonaws.com/uploaded/galleries/14156\\_uploaded/c526b66af28f017556c1381ab492ecb88f4f9bb1.pdf](https://sportlomo-userupload.s3.amazonaws.com/uploaded/galleries/14156_uploaded/c526b66af28f017556c1381ab492ecb88f4f9bb1.pdf)

Within 10 days of the date of this decision.