



**31 March 2022**

## **FOUL PLAY REVIEW COMMITTEE NEWS RELEASE**

**Foul Play Review Committee:** Michael Heron QC (Chair), John Langford and Stefan Terblanche

**Player:** Nepo Laulala

**Team:** Blues

**Position:** Prop

**Date of Incident:** 29 March 2022

**Nature of Offence:** Law 9.20: Dangerous play in a ruck or maul. a. A player must not charge into a ruck or maul. Charging includes any contact made without binding onto another player in the ruck or maul.

**Elapsed time in match when offence occurred:** 57:20

### **SANZAAR NEWS RELEASE**

#### **Nepo Laulala suspended for three weeks**

The SANZAAR Foul Play Review Committee has accepted a guilty plea from Nepo Laulala of the Blues for contravening Law 9.20: Dangerous play in a ruck or maul, after he was Red Carded during a Super Rugby Pacific Match on Tuesday.

Laulala has been suspended from from all forms of the game up to and including 15 April 2022.

The incident occurred in the 57th minute of the match between Moana Pasifika and Blues played at Mt Smart Stadium in Auckland on 29 March 2022.

The SANZAAR Foul Play Review Committee of Michael Heron QC (Chairman), Stefan Terblanche and John Langford assessed the case.

In his finding, Foul Play Review Committee Chairman Michael Heron QC ruled the following:

"Having conducted a detailed review of all the available evidence, including all camera angles and additional evidence, including from the player and submissions from his legal representative, Aaron Lloyd, the Foul Play Review Committee upheld the Red Card under Law 9.20."

"With respect to sanction the Foul Play Review Committee deemed the act of foul play merited a mid-range entry point of 6 weeks due to the World Rugby instructions that dictate any incident of foul play involving contact with the head must start at a mid-range level. Taking into account mitigating factors including the Player's clean judicial record, his acceptance of foul play and his expressed remorse, the Judicial Committee reduced the suspension to 3 weeks."

"The Player was informed of his ability to apply for the Head Contact Process Coaching Intervention. Any player who has a citing or red card upheld by a disciplinary panel for foul play involving the Head Contact Process may apply to have the final week of their sanction substituted by undertaking a coaching intervention that specifically addresses the technical tackle/contact technique-error that caused or contributed to the foul play. This intervention will be

overseen by the World Rugby Coaching Intervention Expert Review Panel – a panel of expert independent coaches - and is only be available to first time offenders."

"The player is therefore suspended for 3 weeks, up to and including 15 April 2022."

All SANZAAR disciplinary matters are in the first instance referred to the Foul Play Review Committee to provide the option of expediting the judicial process.

For a matter to be dispensed with at this hearing, the person appearing must plead guilty and accept the penalty offered by the Foul Play Review Committee.

**ENDS**

**ISSUED BY SANZAAR**