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Decision of the OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee

passed on 12 February 2026

DECISION BY:

Michael Goodwin (Papua New Guinea)

**Chair of the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee, acting pursuant to
Article 87 of the OFC Disciplinary Code**

ON THE CASE OF:

Robea HAUREL

(Decision OFCDEC-002)

REGARDING:

Art. 53(a) of the OFC Disciplinary Code – *Serious Foul*

I. SUMMARY OF FACTS

Competition: OFC Professional League 2026
Match: South Melbourne FC – Vanuatu United FC
Date: 8 February 2026
Venue: PNG Football Stadium, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

1. The Match Report notes the following player from Vanuatu United FC received an expulsion with the corresponding reason:

- 8 Robea HARUEL (28 - Serious foul).

2. The Referee Incident Report of the above-named match states the following:

- Brief explanation of the facts of the incident:

“In the 33 of the match number 8 of Vanuatu United tackled his opponent with force, using his studs to make contact with his opponents shin. The tackle endangered the safety of the opponent and number 8 was shown a red card and sent from the field of play for serious foul play.”

- Brief explanation of the context of the incident, i.e. any injury as a result, did the player return to the match, etc:

“The player who was tackled received treatment on the field of play and the was substituted.”

II. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

1. It is accepted that the applicable Regulations for this matter are:

- a. The OFC Disciplinary Code 2019 (**Disciplinary Code**); and

b. The OFC Professional League Competition Regulations 2025
(**Competition Regulations**).

a. Jurisdiction of the OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee

2. Pursuant to Article 48 of the Competition Regulations:

48.1 Disciplinary incidents during the Competition are dealt with in compliance with the OFC Disciplinary Code in force as well as with the relevant regulations, circulars, OFC Statutes and directives, with which the Participating Clubs undertake to comply.

3. In accordance with the OFC Disciplinary Code, Article 2 provides that the Disciplinary Code applies to every match and competition organised by the OFC and pursuant to Article 85 of the Disciplinary Code, the OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee (**Committee**) is authorised to sanction any breach of OFC regulations, which does not come under the jurisdiction of another body.

4. On that basis, it is accepted the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee has competence to decide over this matter.

b. Jurisdiction of the Chairman ruling alone

5. Article 87 of the OFC Disciplinary Code provides:

1. *The chairman of the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee when acting under this Code may take the following decisions alone:*
 - a. *suspend a person for up to three matches or for up to two months;*
 - b. *impose a fine of up to NZD 500;*
 - c. *rule on a request to extend a sanction (cf. art. 142);*
 - d. *settle disputes arising from objections to members of the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee;*
 - e. *pronounce, alter and annul provisional measures (cf. art. 138).*
2. *If the chairman is prevented from attending and/or participating the deputy chairman replaces him. If the deputy chairman is prevented from attending and/or attending the member holding the most senior position will replace him.*

6. The current Chairmen of the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee are as follows:

- a. Member Michael Goodwin (Chairman of OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee); and
 - b. Member Mark Anthony (Chairman of the Investigatory Chamber of the OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee).
7. It is accepted that Member Goodwin may act in accordance with Article 87 of the Disciplinary Code for this matter.

c. OFC Disciplinary Code

8. It is held the following provisions of the Disciplinary Code are applicable to the facts set out above:

Article 19 Expulsion

1. *An expulsion is the order given by the referee to someone to leave the field of play and its surroundings, including the substitutes' bench, during a match. The person who has been sent off may be allowed into the stands unless he is serving a stadium ban.*
2. *Expulsion takes the form of a red card for players. The red card is regarded as direct if it sanctions serious unsporting behaviour as defined by Law 12 of the Laws of the Game; it is regarded as indirect if it is the result of an accumulation of two yellow cards (cf. Art. 18, par. 2).*
3. *An official who has been sent off may give instructions to the person replacing him on the substitutes' bench. He shall, however, ensure that he does not disturb the spectators or disrupt the flow of play.*
4. *An expulsion automatically incurs suspension from the subsequent match, even if imposed in a match that is later abandoned and/or cancelled and/or forfeited. The Disciplinary and Ethics Committee may extend the duration of the suspension.*

Article 20 Match suspension

1. *A suspension from a match is a ban on taking part in a future match or competition or to attend it in the area immediately surrounding the field of play.*
2. *The player who has been suspended shall not be included on the players' list for the match.*
3. *The suspension is imposed in terms of matches, days or months. Unless otherwise specified, it may not exceed twenty-four (24) matches or two (2) years.*
4. *If the suspension is to be served in terms of matches, only those matches actually played count towards execution of the suspension. If*

a match is abandoned, cancelled or finally forfeited (except of violation of art 73), suspension is only considered to have been served if the team to which the suspended player belongs is not responsible for the facts that led to abandonment, cancellation or forfeiture of the match.

5. A match suspension is regarded as no longer pending if a match is retroactively forfeited because a player took part in a match despite being ineligible (art. 73). This also applies to the match suspension imposed on the player who took part in the match despite being ineligible.
6. If a suspension is combined with a fine, it is prolonged until the fine has been paid in full.

Article 53 Serious infringements

A player is sent off if he commits one of the following infringements (cf. Law 12 of the Laws of the Game and Art. 19 above):

- a) serious foul play such as excessive or brute force;
- b) brutal action such as violent or aggressive conduct;
- c) spitting at an opponent or anyone else;
- d) denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball;
- e) denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the opposing goal by committing an infringement punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick;
- f) making offensive, insulting or abusive remarks;
- g) second caution during the same match (cf. Art. 18 par. 2).

d. OFC Professional League Competition Regulations

9. It is held the following provisions of the Competition Regulations are applicable to the facts set out above:

Article 30 Red and Yellow Cards

30.1 ...

30.2 If a Player or Team Official is sent off as a result of two yellow cards during the same Match, or a direct red card for reasons other than those set out in Article 30.3, they will be automatically suspended from their Participating Club's next Match in the Competition. In addition, further sanctions can be imposed in line with the OFC Disciplinary Code in force at the time of the Competition.

30.3 If a Player or Team Official is sent off as a result of a direct red card for:

30.3.1 Serious foul play;

30.3.2 Biting or spitting; or

30.3.3 Violent Conduct (each as defined in the Laws of the Game),

The default period of suspension for that Player or Team Official shall be their Participating Club's next three Matches. The OFC Disciplinary and

Ethics Committee may reduce or extend the default suspension as it

considers appropriate to the conduct of the Player or Team Official. In

addition, further sanctions can be imposed in line with the OFC Disciplinary Code in force at the time of the Competition.

III. CONSIDERATIONS OF THE DISCIPLINARY AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee reviewed the Referee Incident Report, and in accordance with Article 106 of the Disciplinary Code it is presumed to be accurate.
2. The Committee reviewed the video footage. The referee's decision to issue a red card was correct. Mr Haurel's challenge involved excessive force, studs-up contact to the opponent's leg and he had sufficient opportunity to avoid or withdraw from the tackle.
3. The opponent sustained an injury, received medical treatment, and did not continue the match.
4. Players have a duty not to endanger the safety of their opponents, and such conduct requires appropriate sanctioning to deter similar behaviour in future matches. This duty is heightened in a professional football environment, and the Committee emphasises that such foul play is unacceptable, particularly in the the inaugural OFC Professional League where maintaining high standards of conduct and professionalism is essential.
5. While this challenge constitutes serious foul play, there are no aggravating factors warranting an increased sanction. The Committee is not aware of any previous disciplinary sanctions against the player.

6. The Committee found Mr Haurel to be in breach of Article 53(a) of the OFC Disciplinary Code, and notes that it also has the authority to extend sanctions under Article 30.3 of the Competition Regulations.

IV. SANCTION

1. The Committee imposes a suspension of three (3) matches pursuant to Article 30.3 of the Competition Regulations. These will be the next three OFC matches played by Vanuatu United FC.
2. The Committee is satisfied that this sanction appropriately deters similar conduct and reinforces the importance of player safety and professionalism in the OFC Professional League.

OCEANIA FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION INC.



Franck Castillo
General Secretary - CEO

NOTE RELATING TO LEGAL ACTION:

Pursuant to Article 127 of the Code, an appeal may be lodged to the OFC Appeals Committee against any decision passed by the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee unless the sanction pronounced is:

1. A warning;
2. A reprimand;
3. A suspension for less than three (3) matches or up to two (2) months; or
4. A fine of less than NZD1,000 on a Member Association or a club and of less than NZD500 in other cases. (refer Article 127 of the Code).

Eligibility to appeal is governed by Article 128 of the Code and the grounds of appeal are set out in Article 130 of the Code.

Notice of intention to appeal must be received by the OFC Secretariat of the OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee within 15 days of the communication of this decision.