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Decision of the OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee

passed on 25 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:

Atkin KAUA

(Decision OFCDEC-004)

REGARDING:

Art. 49 of the OFC Disciplinary Code - Violence

I. SUMMARY OF FACTS

Competition: OFC Professional League 2026
Match: Solomon Kings FC - PNG Hekari FC
Date: 22 February 2026
Venue: Home of the Matildas Main Pitch, Melbourne, Australia

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

- 6 Atkin KAUA (90+1 - Violent conduct).

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

- Brief explanation of the facts of the incident:

"In the 90 + 1 Solomon kings #6 was sent off for Violent conduct for striking an opponent PNG Hekari # 11 on the face with his fist."

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

"Player did not sustain any injuries and continued to play after player was sent off."

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. Article 48.1 of the Competition Regulations provides that disciplinary incidents during the Competition are dealt with in accordance with the OFC Disciplinary Code and relevant OFC regulations and directives.
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 Committee has competence to decide over this matter.

b. Jurisdiction of the Chairman ruling alone

5. Article 87 of the Disciplinary Code provides that the Chairman may act alone to:
 - a. suspend a person for up to three matches or two months;
 - b. impose a fine of up to NZD 500;
 - c. rule on requests to extend sanctions;
 - d. settle disputes regarding objections to Committee members;
 - e. pronounce, alter, or annul provisional measures.
6. Member Goodwin may therefore act alone under Article 87.
7. Pursuant to Article 95 of the Disciplinary Code, members of the judicial bodies must decline to participate only where there are serious grounds for questioning their impartiality. Article 95(2) specifies three circumstances requiring recusal:
 - a. where the member is directly involved in the outcome of the matter;
 - b. where the member is associated with any of the parties; or
 - c. where the member has already dealt with the case under different circumstances.
8. None of these circumstances apply here. Member Goodwin has no personal, professional or financial association with either club, no involvement in the incident, and no prior engagement with this case.
9. The Disciplinary Code does not consider shared nationality to constitute a conflict of interest. Nationality alone does not create serious grounds for

questioning impartiality, nor does it fall within any of the mandatory recusal categories under Article 95.

10. Accordingly, Member Goodwin is independent for the purposes of this decision and is permitted to rule alone under Article 87.

c. OFC Disciplinary Code

11. 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 49 Violence

1. A player who deliberately assaults someone, but without harming him physically or damaging his health, will be suspended for at least two (2) matches. An official who commits such an infringement will be suspended for at least four (4) matches.
2. If a person assaults someone by spitting at him, he will be suspended for at least six (6) matches.
3. In any case, the body shall also impose a minimum fine of NZD250. In the case of tournaments with an age limit, the fine can be reduced appropriately.

d. OFC Professional League Competition Regulations

12. 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 (and the VAR confirmation) to issue a red card was correct. At full speed the incident may appear accidental; however, slow-motion review clearly shows a deliberate striking motion. The referee reached the same conclusion upon VAR review.
3. The opponent did not sustain any injuries, and he continued playing after the opponent was sent from the field.
4. The conduct meets the threshold for violence under Article 49. The player deliberately struck his opponent in the head with his fist. Such an action is not a natural football movement and is unacceptable in professional football.
5. Players have a duty not to endanger the safety of opponents. Violent conduct must be sanctioned appropriately to deter similar behaviour. This duty is heightened in a professional league environment, particularly in the inaugural OFC Professional League where maintaining high standards of conduct is essential.
6. While the strike 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.
7. The Committee finds that Atkin Kava breached Article 49 of the Disciplinary Code. The Committee also notes its 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 30.3.3 of the Competition Regulations. These will be the next three OFC matches played by Solomon Kings FC. This includes the automatic one-match sanction under Article 19 of the Disciplinary Code.

2. The Committee also imposes a fine under Article 49 of the Disciplinary Code of **NZD\$500** on Solomon Kings FC **to be paid on or by 4 March 2026.**
3. Article 49(3) imposes a minimum fine of NZD250.00; however, the deliberate and forceful nature of the conduct led the Committee to increase the fine to NZD500.00 as per its discretion. The Committee notes Atkin Kaua and Solomon Kings FC are jointly liable for this fine pursuant to Article 16(4) of the Disciplinary Code.
4. 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.