

# National Serious Case Panel

Case ID:

11021535M

## Disciplinary Commission

*Correspondence Hearing - Chair Sitting Alone*

### Amateur Football Alliance

County FA

v

### Georgie Holt-Ellison

Participant

---

The Decision and Written Reasons of The Commission

---

#### Disclaimer:

*These written reasons contain a summary of the principal evidence before the Commission and do not purport to contain reference to all the points made, however the absence in these reasons of any particular point, piece of evidence or submission, should not imply that the Commission did not take such a point, piece of evidence or submission, into consideration when determining the matter. For the avoidance of doubt, this Disciplinary Commission has carefully considered all the evidence and materials in this matter.*

<b>Content:</b>	<b>Paragraph(s):</b>
• <b>Introduction</b> .....	1 – 4
• <b>The Commission</b> .....	5 – 6
• <b>The Charge(s)</b> .....	7
• <b>The Reply</b> .....	8
• <b>The Hearing and Evidence</b> .....	9 – 16
• <b>Standard of Proof</b> .....	17
• <b>The Decision</b> .....	18
• <b>Previous Disciplinary Record</b> .....	19 – 20
• <b>Aggravating and Mitigating Factors</b> .....	21 – 22
• <b>The FA Guidance on Sanctions</b> .....	23 – 26
• <b>Sanction</b> .....	27 – 28

## **Introduction**

1. On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022, there was a football match (the “match” or “game”) between *HSBC Third* (“HSBC”) and *Old Meadonians Fifth* (“Meadonians”). Mr Georgie Holt-Ellison was playing for Old Meadonians and he is therefore a “participant” for the purpose of this case.
2. It is alleged that after the game had finished, Mr Holt-Ellison was red carded for foul and abusive language. When shown the red card, he proceeded to snatch it off the referee’s hand and then destroyed the card. The referee then described that Mr Holt-Ellison lunged at him for an attack and had to be grabbed by his teammates in order to be stopped. The referee then walks away with Mr Holt-Ellison still shouting abuse at him.
3. This incident was investigated by the County FA and statements were obtained to establish what took place. On the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 the County FA communicated to the participant that they had made a decision to charge on the evidence below.
4. The County FA are subject to managing games within their jurisdiction pursuant to rules and regulations set out by The Football Association (“The FA”).

## **The Commission**

5. The County FA prepared the bundle for these matters and the National Serious Case Panel (“NSCP”) officially appointed me as the “commission” to adjudicate on this case alone as a Chair member.
6. For the purpose of fairness, I am independent to the parties referred to in this case and I did not have a conflict of interest to declare. My decision is based only on the evidence I have been sent and this is outlined below.

## **The Charge(s)**

7. The County FA laid the following charges (these are extracts from The FA Handbook that can be accessed online<sup>1</sup>):

### ***Charge 1***

- 7.1. Rule E3 – Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including physical contact or attempted physical contact and threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour).

- 7.2. The relevant section of FA Rule E3 states:

*“E3.1 A Participant shall at all times act in the best interests of the game and shall not act in any manner which is improper or brings the game into disrepute or use any one, or a combination of, violent conduct, serious foul play, threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting words or behaviour”.*

- 7.3. FA Guidance on threatening behaviour and physical or attempted physical contact states:

*“ Threatening behaviour: words or action that cause the Match Official to believe that they are being threatened. Examples include but are not limited to: the use of words that imply (directly or indirectly) that the Match Official may be subjected to any form of physical abuse either immediately or later, whether realistic or not; the raising of hands to intimidate the Match Official; pretending to throw or kick an object at the Match Official.”*

*“ Physical contact or attempted physical contact: physical actions (or attempted actions) that are unlikely to cause injury to the Match Official but are nevertheless confrontational, examples include but are not limited to: pushing the Match Official or pulling the Match Official (or their clothing or equipment) ”.*

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules/fa-handbook>

### **The Reply**

8. The participant responded by accepting the charge and I was instructed to conduct this case as a correspondence-only hearing.

### **The Hearing and Evidence**

9. Below is a list of documents and/or witnesses in the bundle, that I was provided to consider. Statements that are within quotation marks are unamended extracts from the original source.

10. County FA's evidence in support of the charge(s):

11. William Green, referee

11.1. Extraordinary report: *"After the game had ended the player georgie lott-elison had to be red carded for foul and abusive language. As i was showing him the red card he snatched it out of my hand and destroyed it, He then lunged at me at attack me and i was lucky in the respect that his team mates managed to grab hold of hime and stopped him from getting to me. I walked away to him shouting and using abusive language at me."*

11.2. Further statements clarifying incident.

12. Wayne J Shand, HSBC

12.1. Statement: *"For certain, having spoken with the team, only one other recalls (like me) a player with a shirt off but all were surprised when I advised that someone had been shown a red card, so this was not witnessed by HSBC AFC. I would like to think that this would be acknowledged by the culprit and an apology issued, the team seemed to deescalate by the time we as a team walked past, we left them encouraging all to "calm down" and we left them all on the pitch."*

12.2. Further statement: *“I was captain of the 3rd team on the day, and from my view, after the final whistle Old Meadoanians were openly critical of the referee as some decisions they felt were inconsistent and they were not happy with the cards shown. We did witness a player take his shirt off and being restrained by his team mates, but thought nothing of it, as they (Old Meadonians) did say they would make relevant marks on the ref as some form of feedback and I heard a loud shout of “Calm down” from their position off the field. The referee walked back into the changing room with me and only advised that they (Old Meadonians) need to behave appropriately, but we did not witness a card produced”.*

13. Further email correspondence.

14. Participant’s evidence:

15. Georgie Holt-Ellison

15.1. Statement: *“I am writing this letter of apology for my actions and behaviour on Saturdays (19th November) football match. My passion and love for the game overcame me. I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for both my words and actions. It was never my intention to behave like this, and it is out of character to behave in such a way. I hope you have no hard feelings, and that you can continue refereeing in the professional and fair way you did during last week's game”.*

15.2. Further statement: *“I received a yellow card for saying to the ref that I thought he was biased which I apologised for after. I was ordered to a Sin Bin for 10 minutes - this became 15 mins as the referee didn't keep track of time and I had to keep asking to come back on the pitch. At the end of the game, once the game was over, myself and another player; Ben Weekes approached the referee and asked for his name. He laughed and walked away. After asking again several times he eventually said his name was Bill Greens. I then asked him for his F.A number which he refused*

*to provide so I asked him why did he put me in a sin bin for 25 minutes. He then gave me a red card which I snatched out of his hand and threw to the floor. At no point was there any verbal abuse and at no point did anyone lunge at the referee”.*

16. Further correspondence from Rob Tanner regarding the case.

### **Standard of Proof**

17. As directed by The FA, the appropriate standard of proof in such cases is that of the civil standard. This means that the commission must be satisfied on the balance of probabilities that, as per the evidence presented before it, it was more likely that not that the events occurred as they have been charged.

### **The Decision**

18. I was not required to decide on whether the case was proven or not because the charge had already been accepted. However, for the avoidance of doubt, I would have found it proven because snatching a card and destroying it is abusive behaviour and then proceeding to lunge at the referee is an attempted form of physical contact. Had it not been for the team mates intervening, things may have escalated further.

### **Previous Disciplinary Record**

19. After making my decision for the participant, I was then provided with a copy of his previous records in the last 5 years.

20. The participant has an entirely positive record and I will therefore be giving him credit when considering sanction.

### **Aggravating and Mitigating Factors**

21. Aggravating factors as per sanction guidelines and other observations are:

21.1. I did not find any sufficient aggravating factors as per the guidelines.

22. Mitigating factors as per sanction guidelines and other observations are:

- 22.1. The guilty plea to this matter;
- 22.2. The entirely positive previous disciplinary record;
- 22.3. Remorse.

### **The FA Guidance on Sanctions**

23. The FA Handbook and County FA Disciplinary Sanction Guidelines set out the scope and range of sanctions that are available. The applicable season is 2022/23:

24. County FA Sanction Guidelines:

- 24.1. *“FA Sanction Guideline Matrix - these are guideline sanctions but can be varied when allowed and where appropriate mitigating or aggravating factors exist”*

25. *E3 – Improper Conduct against a Match Official (Including Physical Contact or attempted Physical Contact, Violent Conduct and Threatening and/or Abusive Language/Behaviour):*  
*“Suspension from all football activity for a period of between 112 days and 2 years. The recommended entry point, prior to considering any mitigating or aggravating factors, is 182 days. A fine of up to £150, with a mandatory minimum of £75. Mandatory education programme”.*

26. *An FA Education course must be imposed by the Disciplinary Commission for proven offences of Threatening Behaviour towards a Match Official, Physical Contact or attempted Physical Contact on a Match Official, Assault or attempted Assault on a Match Official.”*



**Sanction**

27. After taking everything into account, I considered the mitigating factors carried more weight than the aggravating factors. I also considered that the facts of the allegation show there was no contact. Therefore, I decreased the recommended entry by 56 days. The sanction that will therefore be imposed upon the participant is the following:

27.1. A suspension of 126 days from all football, effective from the date that the interim suspension started;

27.2. To complete an FA face-to-face education programme before the end of the match bans, or within 28 days of the Disciplinary Commission's decision, whichever is the later. Otherwise, the participant will be suspended until such a date that the programme has been successfully completed. Programme details will be provided;

27.3. Fined the sum of £75;

27.4. 6 penalty points.

28. These decisions are subject to the right of appeal under the relevant FA Rules and Regulations.

**Alban Brahimi, Chair**

19<sup>th</sup> December 2022