

FA NATIONAL SERIOUS CASE PANEL
DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION
CHAIRMAN SITTING ALONE
on behalf of Amateur Football Alliance

CORRESPONDENCE HEARING

of

JORDON ROBERTS

OLD TENISONIANS

[Case ID:11777555M]

THE DECISION AND REASONS OF THE COMMISSION

Introduction

1. On 10th August 2024, Old Tenisonians (“the Club”) played a fixture against Old Meadonians First (“Meadonians”) – collectively the “Match”.
2. The Match Referee, Mr Vincent Hull, reported the conduct of Mr Jordon Roberts (“JR”) a Club player.
3. Amateur Football Alliance (“Amateur FA”) investigated the reported incident.

The Charge

4. On 27th August 2024, Amateur FA charged JR:
 - 4.1. with misconduct for a breach of FA Rule E3 - Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour). It is alleged that Jordon Roberts used threatening and/or abusive and/or indecent and/or insulting language contrary to FA Rule E3.1, and it is further alleged that this constitutes Threatening Behaviour against a Match Official as defined in FA Regulations. This refers to the allegation that Mr Roberts used threatening language towards the Match Official during the fixture by saying “If I ever see you again, I’ll do you” or similar. And/or it is alleged that Mr Roberts used abusive and/or insulting words towards the match Official at half time after they had been shown a red card by saying “You’re a fucking prick” or similar and/or “Fuck off” or similar.
5. The relevant section of FA Rule E3 states:

“E3.1 A Participant shall at all times act in the best interest 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.”
6. Threatening Behaviour against Match Officials is defined, under *Offences Against Match Officials*, as:

“96.1 Threatening behaviour; threatening a Match Official (whether through words or actions and regardless of whether the Match Official believes that they have been 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 and object at the Match Official”.
7. Amateur FA included with the charge letter the evidence that it intended to rely on in this case.
8. JR was required to respond to the charge by 10th September 2024.

The Reply

9. On 28th August 2024, JR responded to the charge online via the Whole Game System, accepting the charge and he requested the case to be dealt with in his absence at a Correspondence Hearing.

The Commission

10. The Football Association (“The FA”) appointed me, Karen Hall, as a Chairman member of National Serious Case Panel, to this Discipline Commission as the Chairman Sitting Alone to adjudicate in these cases.

The Hearing & Evidence

11. I adjudicated this case on 12th September 2024 as a Correspondence Hearing (the “Hearing”).
12. I had received and read the bundle of documents prior to the Hearing.
13. The following is a summary of the principal submissions provided to me. It does not purport to contain reference to all the points made, however the absence in these reasons of any particular point, or submission, should not imply that I did not take such point, or submission, into consideration when I determined the matter. For the avoidance of doubt, I have carefully considered all the evidence and materials furnished with regard to this case.
14. The Match Referee, Mr Vincent Hull, submitted a Report dated 11th August 2024 in which he states that he dismissed JR in the 1st half of the Match. At half time JR approached him and continued to debate his dismissal. Mr Hull told JR that he had nothing further to add and that he should walk away. Eventually he did so but he turned around and from about 5 yards away said to Mr Hull “You’re a fucking prick”. Mr Hull said that he would report his comment and JR told him to “Fuck off”. Mr Hull said that he would report that comment also. In reply JR said “If I ever see you again, I’ll do you”.
15. As part of the investigation, Amateur FA sought further clarification from Mr Hull. In an email dated 12th August 2024 Mr Hull stated that JR told him to “fuck off” twice. This would have been heard by other players who were in the vicinity. He did consider abandoning the match, but he knows the Club and knows that this behaviour is not normal. He went to the Clubhouse and spoke with a Club Official and explained what had happened. The Club Official did apologise.
16. As part of the investigation, Amateur FA sought observations from the Club. In an email dated 19th August 2024, the Club stated that although the Manager could recall a number of players approaching the Referee at half time, he did not hear what was said.
17. JR provided a response to the allegations made. In an email from the Club dated 15th August 2024, he stated that he understands that his actions and response to the Referee was unacceptable. He apologises for the comments made and to both teams. He goes on to say that his comments were borne out of frustration following a tackle which caused an immediate injury to him but went unpunished by the Referee. Within the bundle are photographs which should a soft tissue injury to the upper leg.
18. That concluded relevant evidence in this case.

Standard of Proof

19. The applicable standard of proof required for this case is the civil standard of the balance of probability. This standard means, I would be satisfied that an event occurred if I considered that, on the evidence, it was more likely than not to have happened.

The Findings & Decision

20. JR had responded to the charge by admitting the same and credit will be given for the guilty plea.
21. Liability was predetermined by the guilty plea and therefore in respect of the Charge against JR of misconduct for a breach of FA Rule E3 - Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including

threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour), this was accepted by him and based on that, coupled with the undisputed evidence above, I found that the charge was PROVEN.

Previous Disciplinary Record

22. After finding the charge proven, I sought the participants offence history. I note that JR has no other proven misconduct charges in the preceding five years.

Mitigation

23. There is no mitigation within the bundle. I note JR's comment regarding the reasons for his frustration.

The Sanction

24. The relevant FA Disciplinary Regulations on sanction (Regulation 101.7.1) states that in respect of this charge a sanction of a suspension from all football activities for a period of between 112 days and 182 days, with a minimum entry point of 147 days prior to considering any aggravating or mitigating factors shall be imposed. In addition, there shall be a fine of up to £200 (two hundred pounds) with a mandatory minimum of £100 (one hundred pounds). There shall also be an order that the participant completes an education programme before the time based suspension is served.

25. Regulation 102 provides factors to be considered when determining sanction. In that regard I note that JR threatened the Referee with the comment "If I ever see you again, I'll do you". He also told him to "Fuck off" twice and called him a "fucking prick". The match was only not abandoned because the Referee was confident that the behaviour was "not normal" for the Club. JR has subsequently apologised.

26. This offence merited a sanction of a suspension of 170 (one hundred and seventy) days. This was mitigated by JR's previous disciplinary record to 147 (one hundred and forty seven) days. Sanction was mitigated further by the guilty plea.

27. After taking into consideration all the circumstances in this case, Mr Jordon Roberts is:

27.1. to serve an immediate suspension from all football and football activities for 100 (one hundred) days;

27.2. fined a sum of £140 (one hundred and forty pounds);

27.3. to satisfactorily complete an online mandatory education programme before the time-based suspension is served, or Mr Roberts be suspended until such time he successfully completes the mandatory education programme, the details of which will be provided to him; *and*

27.4. 8 (eight) Club Disciplinary Points to be added.

28. The decision is subject to the right of appeal under the relevant FA Rules and Regulations.

Signed...

Karen Hall F.Clnt.L.Ex (Chair)

12th September 2024