

# **The Football Association Disciplinary Commission**

**(‘The Commission’)**

**Sitting on behalf of Amateur Football Alliance**

**In the matters of:**

**Charlie Harper and Thomas Papamichael**

**(Case numbers 10782129M, 10785948M and 10782084M)**

## **Disciplinary Commission Decision:**

1. The members of the Commission were Les Pharo chair, Jen Gregory and John Horsley appointed by the FA. The Secretary to the commission was Hayley Cain.

2. **Mr Charlie Harper of Old Parkonians FC was the subject of one charge:**

**A breach of FA Rule E3: Improper conduct against a match official (including physical contact or attempted physical contact and threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour).**

**There was an alternative charge which may be considered:**

**A breach of rule E3: Improper conduct against a match official – (including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour).**

3. **Mr Papamichael was the subject of two charges:**

**Charge 1.**

**A breach of rule E3: Improper conduct – Assault or attempted assault on a Match Official.**

**There was an alternative charge which may be considered:**

**A breach of rule E3: Improper conduct against a match official – (including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour).**

**Charge 2.**

**A breach of rule E3: Improper conduct against a match official – (including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour).**

**The Rules Rule E3:** The FA handbook state the following:

*“ 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, of a combination of, violent conduct, serious foul play, threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting words or behaviour”.*

*“Physical contact or attempted physical contact: examples include, but are not limited to: pushing the match official, pulling the match official, (or their clothing or equipment), barging or kicking the ball at a match official (causing no injury) and/or attempting to make physical contact with the match official (for example, attempting to strike, kick butt, barge or kick the ball at the match official”*

*“Assault or Attempted Assault: acting in a manner which results in an injury to the Match Official. This includes causes or attempts to cause injury to a Match Official (whether or not it does in fact cause injury), examples include, but are not limited to, causing and/or attempting to cause injury by spitting (whether it connects or not), causing and/or attempting to cause injury by striking, or attempting to strike, kicking or attempting to kick, butting or attempting to butt, barging or attempting to barge, kicking or throwing any item directly at the Match Official”.*

4. The charges were brought by the Amateur Football Alliance, on receipt of a report from the referee Mr Robert Howard, who reported that on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022, in a match between Old Parkonians Fourth and Winchmore Hill Fourth, he sent off Mr Harper, who then made an attempt to grab him, and in doing so “knocked the cap off his head”. Mr Papamichael then became involved, and was “extremely aggressive and tried to grab me and struck me in the head”. The match was then abandoned.

5. **The responses:**

**Mr Charlie Harper** had responded and admitted the charge against him, and requested a personal hearing to give a verbal plea for leniency.

**Mr Thomas Papamichael** had responded and admitted the charge against him, and requested that the matters be dealt with by way of correspondence.

6. As these matters occurred at the same match, the issues were dealt with as a consolidated hearing as per FA Regulations, on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022.
7. The following is a summary of the principal submissions considered by the Commission. It does not purport to contain reference to all points considered. However the absence in these reasons of any point, or submission, should not imply that the Commission did not take such point, or submission, into consideration when reviewing the matters. For the avoidance of doubt, the Commission carefully considered all the evidence and materials furnished regarding these cases.
8. In respect of all these matters, there were reports on behalf of the County, from the match referee Mr Robert Howard including various emails between him and the County, and Stephen Combe of Winchmore Hill and Mark Freedman, the League referee Secretary.
9. On behalf of Mr Harper and Mr Papamichael there was correspondence to consider from Charlie Harper, Joseph Lappin, Thomas Papamichael, Brandon Byrne and Eddie Bow, all of Old Parkonians.
10. Mr Harper was accompanied at the hearing by Brandon Byrne, who attended to give support to Mr Harper, and did not take part in the hearing. The details of the charge were explained to Mr Harper, which included the fact that an “attempt” was included

in the charge wording, and the possible sanction that could be imposed. He then stated he now understood the charge and the possible outcome, and confirmed that he admitted the offence.

11. In his submission in respect of leniency in this matter, he stated that he had been playing football since a young child, and that this team had been formed for about a year, when a group of friends who played together decided to form a team. He mentioned an incident where he had allegedly committed a foul, where he believed the referee had made a mistake. He said that the content of the referee report was correct, but that he had not actually “knocked off the referees hat”. He explained that football was a means of escape from his domestic life, and he wants to be able to do so again, as he has missed it during his suspension since this incident.
12. The record of Mr Harper was then made known to the commission, and it was noted there had been no other misconduct charges against him. He agreed that his record was correct.
13. The commission then considered the matter, and due to the admission, the alternative charges were not considered, and in deciding sanction took the following into consideration : the apology in his statement, his plea of guilty, his previous record and the fact that he had taken the time to attend a hearing to give his account. It was also noted that this was an attempt at physical contact, and that no contact had actually been made. However this was threatening behaviour and not acceptable. Having considered these factors, and taking into account the FA sanction guidelines, the following sanction was made:

**Mr Charlie Harper :**

**For A Breach of FA Rule E3: Improper conduct against a match official (including physical contact or attempted physical contact and threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour).**

**Mr Harper is suspended for a period of 248 days in total, this includes a 92-day added suspension to cover the period of inactivity during the summer break, and he is also fined the sum of £100. The suspension will start from the date of the interim suspension date, that being the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022.**

**Mr Harper is to attend a face-to-face education course to be completed by the end of the suspension period, if not a sine-die suspension will be imposed until the course is completed.**

**8 disciplinary points are awarded against Old Parkonians FC.**

14. The charges against Thomas Papamichael were then considered, and due to the admission, the alternative charges were not considered. Having reviewed the correspondence in these matters, noting that it was continuing misconduct, and that there was a further confrontation with the referee in his dressing room after the match, and having taken into consideration his previous record, his plea of guilty, the seriousness of these issues and the FA sanction guidelines, the following sanctions were imposed:

**For a breach of rule E3: Improper conduct – Assault or attempted assault on a Match Official:**

**Mr Thomas Papamichael is suspended from all football for a period of 6 years. The suspensions will start from the date of the interim suspension date, that being the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022.**

**He is to attend a face-to-face education course to be completed by the end of the suspension period, if not a sine-die suspension will be imposed until the course is completed.**

**10 disciplinary points are awarded against Old Parkonians FC.**

**Charge 2.**

**For a breach of rule E3: Improper conduct against a match official – (including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour.**

**Mr Thomas Papamichael is suspended from all football for a period of 182 days, and fined the sum of £100.**

**10 disciplinary points are awarded against Old Parkonians FC.**

15. There is a right of appeal against these decision in accordance with the relevant provisions set out in the prevailing FA Rules and Regulations of the Association.

Les Pharo Chair  
Jen Gregory  
John Horsley

21<sup>st</sup> April 2022