

**IN THE MATTER OF THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION
CHAIR ALONE NON – PERSONAL HEARING**

**AMATEUR FA
(on behalf of the Football Association)**

and

CONNOR LIDDELL

DECISION AND WRITTEN REASONS

Overview

1. These are the written reasons for the decision and sanction in relation to a non-personal hearing on 10 May 2023 following charges brought by Amateur FA against Connor Liddell (Case ID: 11217652M) (“**CL**”).

The Charges

2. CL has been charged by Norfolk FA with a breach of:
 - (a) FA Rule 3.1 – Improper Conduct (including foul and abusive language) and
 - (b) FA Rule 3.2 - Improper Conduct – aggravated by a person’s Ethnic Origin, Colour, Race, Nationality, Faith, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation or Disability.

(collectively, the “**Charges**”).
 - (c) The particulars of the Charges are that CL said ‘batty man’ which is a comment aggravated by reference to sexual orientation.
 - (d) CL has accepted the Charges.

The Evidence

3. This matter relates to a fixture between Latymer Old Boys Third & Southgate County Third, which took place on 8 April 2023.
4. The relevant factual background herein is a summary of the principal submissions provided to the Chair. It does not purport to contain reference to all the points made, or to all the statements and information provided, however the absence in these reasons of any particular point, or submission, should not imply that the Chair did not take such point, or submission, into consideration when he determined the matter. For the avoidance of doubt, the Chair has carefully considered all the evidence and materials furnished in this case.

5. The Chair has before him the following evidence:

5.1 Football Association Extraordinary Incident Report Form of Abiodun Abraham dated 11 April 2023:

"Fred Perkins of (Latymer Old Boys III) came to me after the final whistle of the game and made a complain that Connor Liddell of (Southgate County Count III) made some 'homophobic comments' toward him during the course of the game(although I wasn't informed of this during the game).

I asked him what and what was said against him. He said he was called a 'gay' many times during the game, and his unable to put to words the rest of the things he said towards him.

I called both the captain and manager of both team together to inform them of what I was told. I also called the player that was involved and informed him of what was said against him in the presence of both team captain and managers. His reply, was, 'I stand with whatever I have said and am not apologising for it'. The complain player was then advised to speak to his club secretary and put his complaints forward to the league."

5.2 Various Statements of Latymer players:

(a) **Fred Perkins:** The player was holding me, I said 'wow you want me' and he disgustingly said 'urggh I'm not fucking gay'. When talking about me to a teammate, he referred to me as 'that batty boy with the ponytail' and a couple called me 'gay guy' or called me 'gay' in a very derogatory and seemingly disgusted way.

(b) **George Perkins:** I heard the player call Fred a 'batty boy'.

(c) **David Verry:** After the game, I was alerted to the fact that Fred Perkins was making a report to the referee about the conduct of the Southgate players. Fred was making it clear that he had received homophobic abuse throughout the game from the Southgate player who we believe to be CL. For example, he said he was repeatedly called a 'batty boy'. James said he had not heard this abuse and would have substituted CL if he had. CL came over to the group and was asked by one of our players if he would like to take the opportunity to apologise to Fred. His response was 'no, not really'.

5.3 Statement from CL dated 11 April 2023. CL's evidence is reproduced herein:

"The confrontation between myself and number 7 from the opposition team, occurred when he'd dragged me to the floor deliberately in our keepers box and the referee at the time didn't see the incident and play continued. Which led to be a corner, then the opposition player then started to touch my hand and deliberately decided to grab my groin. Out of anger at the time, then I proceeded to call him a 'batty man' and questioned his actions, however the player continue to call my names such as "little boy' due to my height.

After the match the opposition player, made a complaint to the ref. Which I saw our team captain being called over, I'm not sure what was said or the conversation but then I was called over a moments later. Which I was then talked to by the referee and the referee asked me to apologise which I declined because of the assault that had taken place before my comment. After the refusal the opposition player shouted directly at me 'you're a fucking cunt'.

Decision on Sanction

6. As CL has admitted the Charges, the Chair considered the appropriate sanction to impose.
7. In accordance with Appendix 1 of the FA Disciplinary Regulations 2022/23, an aggravated breach will result in an immediate suspension from football of between 6 matches and 12 matches. A mandatory education programme is to be imposed with any ancillary sanction such as a fine at the discretion of a Regulatory Commission.
8. It is at the Chair's discretion to vary a sanction where there are aggravating or mitigating factors present for the participants.
9. The Chair consulted CL's previous disciplinary history and noted that prior to this incident, CL had a clean disciplinary record.
10. The Chair considered that in this case, there were a number of mitigating factors, including the acceptance of the Charges, the clean disciplinary history and CL's cooperation with the FA's investigation.
11. Accordingly, the Chair imposed the following sanction:
 - (a) A six (6) match suspension.
 - (b) An education programme to be undertaken virtually by the conclusion of the suspension period.
 - (c) 5 penalty points.
12. There is a right of appeal against this decision in accordance with the relevant provisions set out in the rules and regulations of the Football Association.

Elliott Kenton
National Serious Case Panel Chair
10 May 2023