

Football Association Disciplinary Commission on behalf of Berks and Bucks FA

In the matter of Improper Conduct Charges against Aaron Goodman of Barton Rovers

Reasons for Disciplinary Commission Decision 19 December 2020

1. The Regulatory Commission was formed by Roger Burden sitting alone as the FA-Appointed Chair.
2. Rachel Scase of the FA acted as Secretary, supplying the appropriate documentation.
3. The Commission was conducted via email using correspondence.
4. Aaron Goodman was charged under FA Rule E3 – Improper Conduct (including foul and abusive language).
He was also charged under FA Rule E3(2) – Improper Conduct aggravated by a person’s ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
5. The charge arose from an allegation that Aaron Goodman had used the words “fucker” and “you can’t even speak English” to a parent of a child from Reading City U11 prior to a match on 27 September 2020.
6. Mr Goodman had denied the charge and asked for it to be dealt with by way of correspondence.
7. The following is a summary of the written submissions provided to me. As it is a summary, it does not contain reference to all the points made, however, for the avoidance of doubt, I carefully considered all the submissions in respect of this case.
8. Summary of the Written Submissions
 - A long email from Thierry Rabot, in which he said that, during a confrontation between himself and Mr Goodman in the car park, Mr Goodman had started to swear and used the word “fucker” in front of Mr Rabot’s son and then said “you can’t even speak English”. In his report, Mr Rabot says that he is French and speaks with a French accent.

- An email from Julian Bradford of Reading City U11s, in which he said that he had not witnessed the original incident, but he was stopped by Mr Rabot who was visibly shaken and who explained what had happened. Mr Bradford then approached Aaron and asked “why?” Mr Goodman replied by saying that Thierry was a fucking idiot fucking twat.
- A report from Max Clift, the Match Referee, which mentioned continual shouts and complaints coming from the Barton Management team but made no reference to the incident in question.
- A report from “John” in which he said that he had received details from Aaron about the incident. The report said that Aaron had responded equally forthrightly to Mr Rabot during the exchange of words but “John” did not mention any of the actual words used.
- A Club Statement from Barton Rovers giving no details of the words used but suggesting that the altercation was instigated by Mr Rabot and that he should have expected some form of retort.
- A statement from Aaron Goodman in which he said that the discussion lasted no more than 30 seconds and he had thought no more about it. He could not recall the actual words used in the confrontation which, he suggested, was started by the driver of the other vehicle without provocation.

9. Assessing the Evidence

- There was clearly a heated discussion in the car park between Mr Rabot and Mr Goodman.
- Mr Rabot recalled, and quoted, some of the actual words used by Mr Goodman.
- It was clear from the Referee’s report and the report from Mr Bradford, that Mr Goodman was not averse to shouting, complaining and using bad language.
- In both the statements from Barton Rovers and Mr Goodman, there is no report of the actual words used, or any denial that Mr Goodman made a derogatory reference regarding Mr Rabot’s nationality and accent. Both statements sought to justify Mr Goodman’s response as being provoked by Mr Rabot.

10. Decision

- The standard of proof required for these matters is the balance of probability. This means that I have to be satisfied that it was more likely than not that Aaron Goodman said something that contravened FA Rule E3(2) because the language he used was aggravated by nationality.
- Based on my assessment of the evidence, I find that the standard has been met and I find the charge proven.

11. Sanction

- Aaron Goodman had no previous incidents on his disciplinary record.
- For this offence, the FA's Regulations state a minimum immediate suspension of between 6 matches and 12 matches.
- The normal fine for this offence is £75, but I do have discretion regarding the fine and I will take into account the financial impact of the Covid lockdowns.
- Aaron Goodman will serve an immediate ground ban of 6 matches.
- He is fined the sum of £40
- He must attend an FA on-line education course before 1 April 2020.
- 6 penalty points to be applied to Barton Rovers

12. These decisions can be appealed in line with FA Regulations.

Roger Burden

Chairman

19 December 2020.