

A MATCH OFFICIAL'S GUIDE TO PERSONAL HEARINGS

The FA FOR ALL

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WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED TO ATTEND A PERSONAL HEARING?



When a person charged by the County FA does not accept a Match Officials Report, that person has the right to request a Personal Hearing and cannot be denied that right, unless the time period in which to respond has expired.

There may be a variety of reasons for a person requesting a Personal Hearing and a Match Official's attendance at hearings has to be accepted as part of the role they play in protecting players and applying The Laws of the Game.

You are asked to attend a Personal Hearing as a witness to the events you saw during the incident reported.

You are not on trial. You are simply there as a witness for the County FA. You will not be expected to 'Prove' the case, or find any sort of outcome. This is the job of the Disciplinary Commission.

DO I HAVE TO ATTEND?

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT OR CANNOT ATTEND?

When a hearing is requested, the Match Official will be asked and expected to make every effort to attend and is required to do so as part of the Referee regulations.

The Match Officials attendance enables the Disciplinary Commission to come to a decision based on as much evidence as they need to hear.

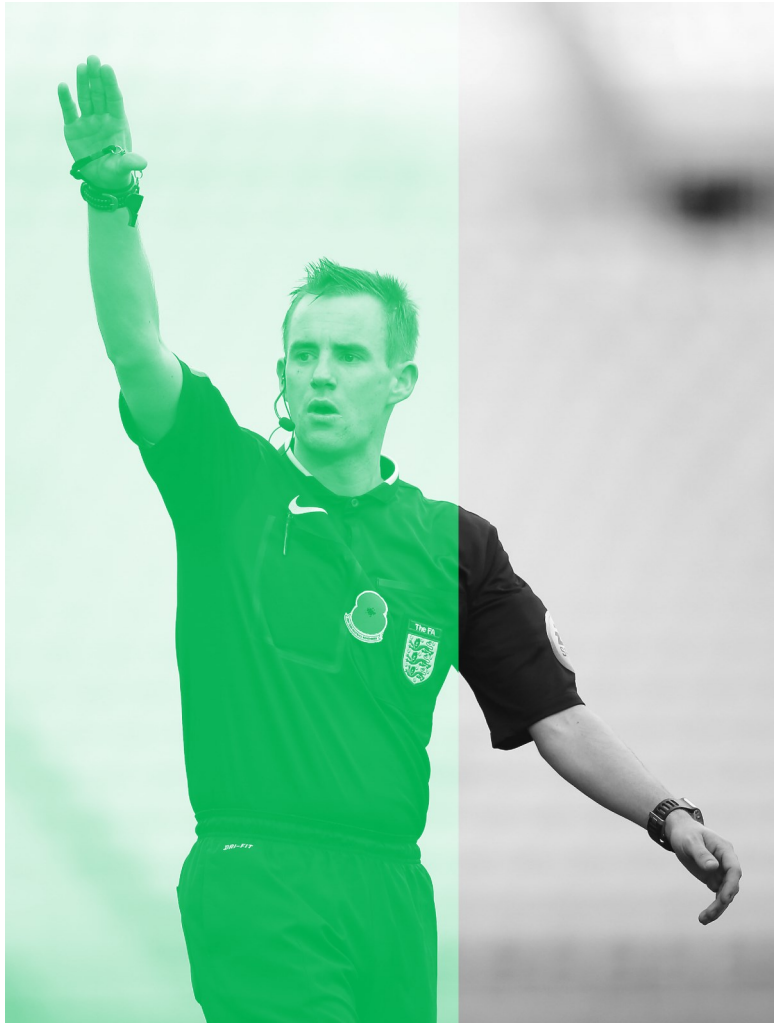
If you are unable to attend on a given date, you need to inform the County FA as soon as possible.

You will then be given one alternative opportunity to attend. If you fail to show on the re-arranged date, the case may go ahead in your absence, as it is important to deal with the case as close to the date of the match as possible and the non attendance may be referred to the Discipline Department for possible action.

It is normal practice for everyone to attend the first date provided.



DO I NEED TO BRING ANYTHING WITH ME TO THE HEARING?



You do not have to bring anything with you to the hearing if you do not wish to.

However, it is generally a good idea to bring a copy of the report that you submitted to the County FA when the incident first happened. Although the Commission will already have copies of the report, it may be useful to bring with you, in order to refer to it, and to refresh your memory as to what you had written.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

There is not set dress code for a Personal Hearing however it is normal for Referees to dress in accordance with the dress code for a County appointment.

We want you to feel as relaxed and as comfortable as possible.



WHO ELSE WILL BE THERE?



As well as the person/s charged from your report, there will also be at least four other people in attendance:

- A Disciplinary Chair (chosen from the County FA's Discipline Committee)

- 2 Commission Members (also chosen from the County FA's Discipline Committee)

- A Secretary (usually a member of staff from the office)

The person/s charged may also bring witnesses to back up their case.

Additional people who may appear at the Personal Hearing may include the County FA Child Welfare Officer and/or the County FA Referee Development Officer.

If you are a young match official and feel uncomfortable, you may also bring an observer to give moral support (please contact the County FA for further information).

CAN I BRING ANY WITNESSES?

No. As stated previously, you are there as a witness for the County FA, and you are not actually on charge yourself, so therefore you are not asked to bring any witnesses.

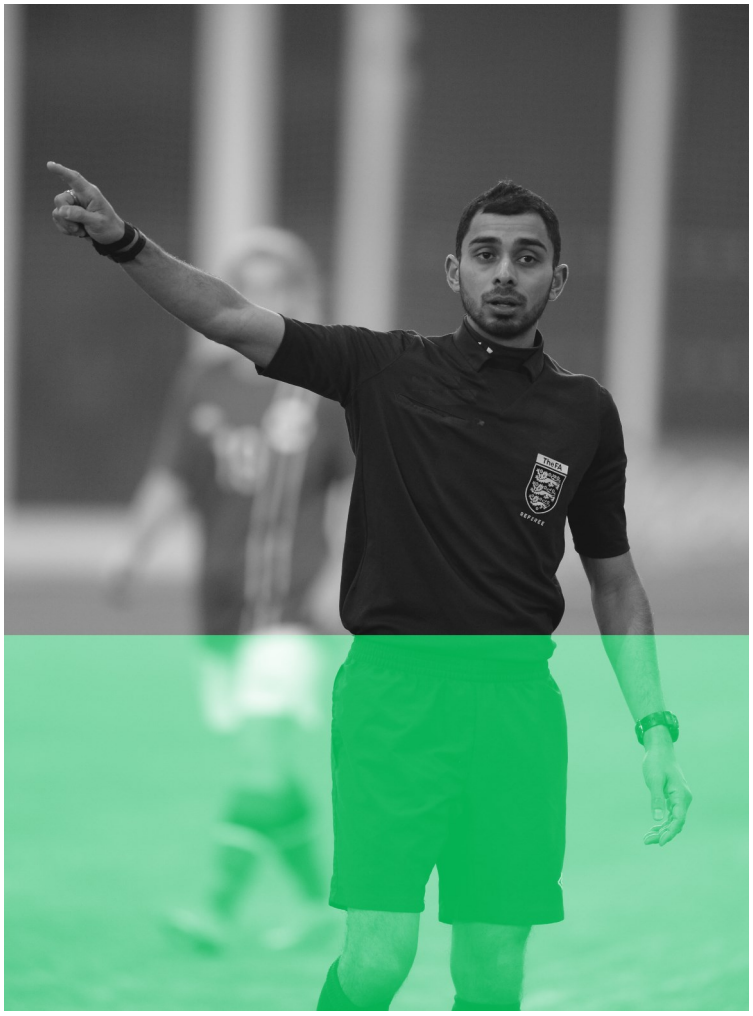
However, if your assistant referee/s have seen the incident, they are more than welcome to submit a report with their versions of events included to the County FA.

However, if your Assistant has been involved in the incident or part of it, The County FA may also ask the Assistant to attend to give their evidence. But this would be entirely up to the County FA and whether they felt it would help to get the right result.

You may also be allowed to bring a family member or friend for support if you are nervous about the Personal Hearing. However, they would not be allowed to say anything in the hearing.



HOW LONG DO PERSONAL HEARINGS LAST?



This depends on the case and how much evidence there is to present.

As a general rule we allow 45 minutes to an hour for each case. However, some will last longer depending on the details.

Please bear this in mind when you attend a Personal Hearing. If the Hearing before you over-runs, the Commission may be late starting your Personal Hearing. Please be respectful of this, as it could be **your** Personal Hearing that over-runs, resulting in the third case starting late too.

WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES AT A PERSONAL HEARING?

When you arrive at the hearing, the Secretary will meet you and record everyone's name. You will then be asked to wait until the Commission are ready to begin. If you have any additional reports/statements to add you must let the Secretary know at this point. However, it is recommended that these documents are with the County FA before your Hearing to ensure the Commission has received everything prior to the case being heard.

When the Commission is ready to begin, you will be shown to the meeting room.

The Chair will then introduce the panel, and ask you to introduce yourself. At this point you will be asked if you wish to change anything with regards to your report or if you wish to add anything.

The witnesses will then be asked to give their versions of events one at a time. The Club or Participant charged will then be given the opportunity to ask questions with regards to the incident concerned.

The Commission will also ask any questions they may have after reading the report and hearing the witnesses version of events.



WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES AT A PERSONAL HEARING?



Always remember, you are not on trial, and any verbal attacks against your performance carry no weight at all in a Disciplinary Commission and will simply be ignored, and should be discouraged by the Chair.

You must bear in mind throughout the Hearing that the Commission were not present at the match. Through questioning and hearing all the evidence presented from both sides they must build up a picture of what took place.

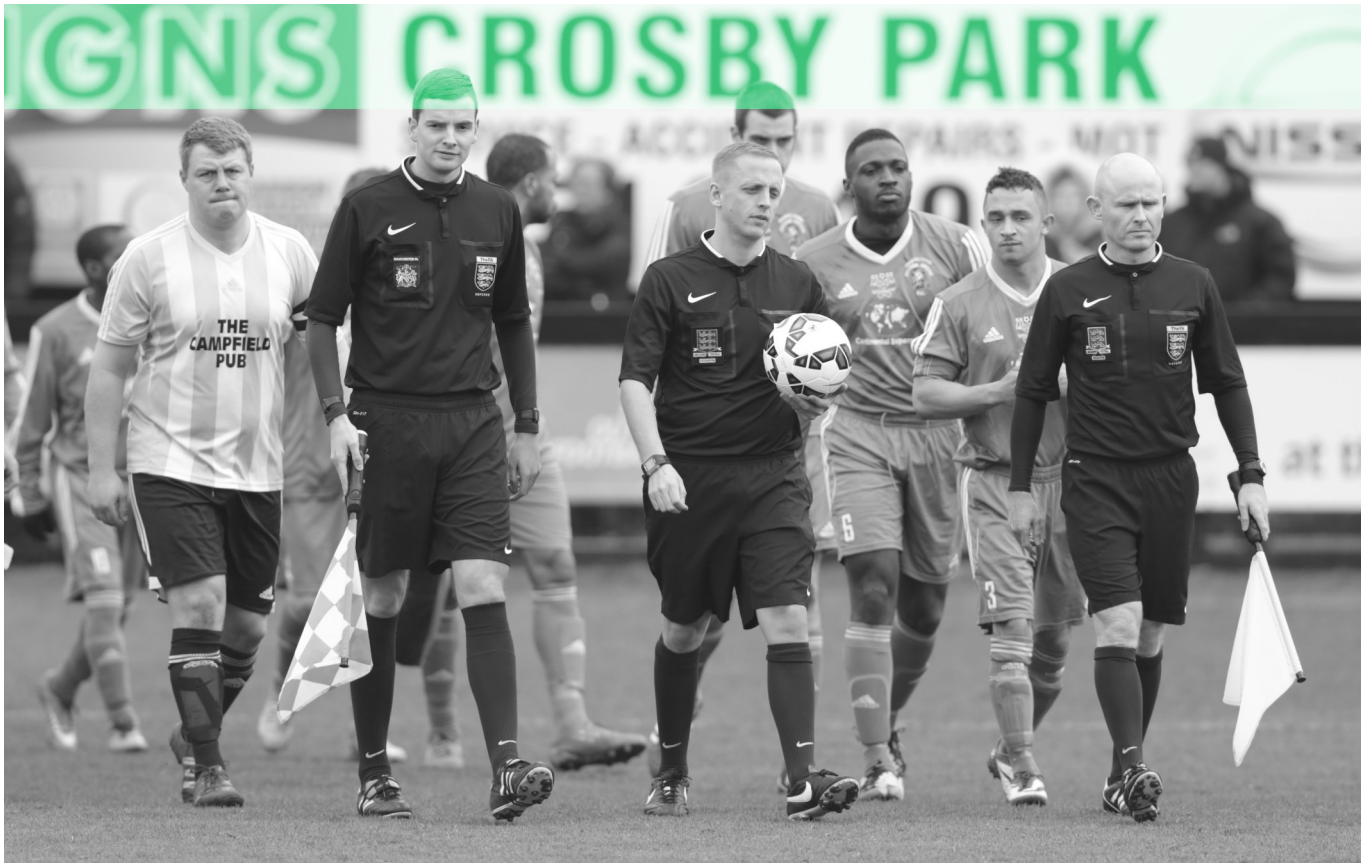
Once all the evidence has been heard, the referee and witnesses will be asked to leave whilst the Commission considers the case.

The Commission then decides (in private) if the case is Proven or Not Proven.

When a Not Proven verdict is given, it does not mean that the Match Official has 'lost' the case. The case was never there to be won or lost. The Match Official, on the day, has done nothing wrong. They have seen an infringement and acted upon it.

WILL I RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF THE OUTCOME?

You can ask the County FA to let you know the outcome the following day after the Hearing as long as the Participant charged is aware.



YOUTH PROCEDURES



The following procedures must be adopted when young people are involved in personal hearings:

Evidence can only be received from young people (who must be accompanied by a responsible adult) in front of the Commission Members, Commission Secretary, Participant charged and his/her representative.

No other persons are to be permitted within the room whilst a young person is giving evidence.

Only the Chair of the Commission is permitted to ask questions of the Young person.

If the representatives or the Participant charged wish to ask questions, or if other members of the Commission wish to ask questions, those questions must be addressed through the Chair, who will put the questions to the Young person.

At the end of the questioning by the Commission, and having confirmed the participant or representative charged has no further questions that need to be put to the young person, the young person will be permitted to leave the room and will not be required to stay for the remainder of the hearing unless they specifically request to do so.

YOUTH PROCEDURES

It is preferable at this stage that the Young Person leaves the Commission venue completely although the practicalities surrounding joint travel with other attendees may make this difficult. However, the Young Person should not remain in the Commission room.

The procedures must be sent to all parties in advance of the Personal Hearing so that they are aware of the procedures before arriving and so that they can prepare appropriately.




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