

# **DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION**

**On behalf of the Essex County Football Association**

**Non-Personal Hearing**

**of**

**JOE WILLIAMS  
(Harold Hill FC)  
Case ID: 9517271M**

## **THE DECISION AND REASONS OF THE COMMISSION**

Warning: This document may contain offensive language. Any reference to participants under the age of 18 has been redacted

## Introduction

1. On 16<sup>th</sup> September 2018 Harold Hill Sunday played Olympic Upminster First in a match in the Brentwood Sunday League Division One (“the match”).
2. A report was forwarded to Essex County Football Association (“Essex FA”) by the Referee, Jeffrey Caley, on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2018. This contained allegations that Joe Williams, a player in the match, used foul and abusive language towards the referee and continued by threatening to knock him out. He had to be held back by his team mates.
3. Essex FA raised charges on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

## The Charge

4. Joe Williams was charged under FA Rule E3 – Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour) after being sent from the field of play.
5. The details of the charge against Joe Williams, contained in the charge letter, were: *“in 87th min Joe William entered the field of play as a sub, on entering the field he commented to me we called for that sub fucking 5mins ago on hearing this i was about to caution him when he said to me do what you fucking want mug so I gave him a straight red ,) with this he called me a fucking dickhead you cunt and fucking mug again .then turned and came back at me telling me I'll fucking knock you out you cunt having to be held back by his team players continues to call me a cunt and threaten me then he was escorted off the field by his team”*
6. The relevant section of FA Rule E3 states:  
*“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.”*

## Documentation

7. Essex FA included within the charge letter the following evidence they intended to rely on:
  - (i) The Referee report from the match as indicated above.

## The Reply

8. On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 Joe Williams responded to the charge, pleading Guilty by selecting Option A on the WGS portal. There was no further documentation submitted.

## The Commission

9. The Discipline Commission members appointed by the Essex County Football Association were:
  - (i) Mr David Emerton (Chairman)
  - (ii) Ms Sheryl MacRae (Essex FA Council Member)
  - (ii) Mr Andy Schooler (Independent)
10. Mr Robert Craven, of the Essex FA Governance Team, acted as Secretary to the Commission.
11. The Commission took place at the Essex County Football Association Headquarters on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018, commencing at 10:20am.
12. This was a non-personal hearing so neither the Player charged nor the Referee were in attendance.
13. The Commission had received and read the documents prior to the hearing.

## **Standard of Proof**

- 14.** The Commission reminded itself that the burden of proving a charge falls upon the County FA.
- 15.** The applicable standard of proof required for this case is the civil standard of proof namely, the balance of probability. This standard means the Commission would be satisfied that an event occurred if it considered that, on the evidence, it was more likely than not to have happened.

## **Findings**

- 16.** The charge was that there was Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour). The player had pleaded Guilty to the charge and wished the case to dealt with in his absence.
- 17.** Having carefully considered the whole of the documentation, the Commission members unanimously concluded that the charge against Joe Williams under FA Rule E3 – Improper Conduct (including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour) was Proven.

## **Sanction**

- 18.** The Sanction Guidelines for a Proven charge of Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour) indicate that the recommended punishment for Threatening Behaviour against a Match Official is a suspension of 112 days/12 matches plus a fine up to £100 with a minimum of 56 days/6 matches and a £50 fine.
- 19.** The Commission considered the player's five-year disciplinary record which showed no previous incidents of a similar nature. It was noted that the player had pleaded guilty to the charge.
- 20.** In view of this mitigation, the decision of the Commission is to impose a suspension from All Football for a period of 10 matches and a fine of £75
- 21.** The decision of the Commission is subject to the right of appeal under the relevant Rules and Regulations of the Football Association.

Signed

Mr. David Emerton (Chairman)  
Ms. Sheryl MacRae  
Mr. Andrew Schooler  
(23rd October 2018)