

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION

Sitting on behalf of Gloucestershire Football Association

NON-PERSONAL HEARING

of

**DANIEL COPELAND
LAWRENCE WESTON SATURDAY**

THE DECISION AND REASONS OF THE COMMISSION

Introduction

1. The Disciplinary Commission ('the Commission') was appointed to hear and determine proceedings brought against Daniel Copeland ('DC') (Case ID number: 10700596M) in a fixture between Lawrence Weston Saturday First and Sea Mills Park First on 29 January 2022.
2. The Disciplinary Commission was constituted of a single member, Mr Davide Corbino, an Independent FA appointed Chair.
3. DC was charged with misconduct by letter dated 2 February 2022. He was charged with a breach of FA Rule E3 – Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour). It was alleged that DC directed the comment “when you are out of your kit, you and I are having it out” and other comments towards the Match Official.
4. DC accepted the charge and requested that the matter was dealt with by way of a non-personal hearing.

Evidence

5. The following is a summary of the principal evidence provided to the Commission. It does not purport to contain reference to all the points made, however the absence in these reasons of any particular point, or evidence,

should not imply that the Commission did not take such point, or evidence, into consideration when the members determined the matter. For the avoidance of doubt, the Commission has carefully considered all the evidence and materials furnished with regard to the case within these proceedings.

6. On 29 January 2022, Christopher Wilmot, the Match Referee ('the referee'), submitted a County Association Report Form stating, as far as relevant, the following:

“During the half time interval with the Lawrence Weston manager speaking to his players on the pitch, I advised the manager that Dan Copeland who was sat in the home dugout after his 2nd sin binning yellow card for dissent, could not return to the field play after half time, but could be replaced by a substitute. The manager understood my statement and I moved towards the changing rooms. As I crossed the touchline, Dan Copeland then said “Nothing to say to me?” I said “No, just explained to your manage you cannot return after half time and play in the game”. Dan Copeland then got up from his seated position and walked towards me and said “I have something to say to you”, “when you are out of your kit, you and I are having it out”. I told him to go away, at which point he then started to use abusive language and say he was going to sort me out after the game. At this point, I showed Dan Copeland a Red card. He continued to make threats and I advised him the game would be abandoned unless he returned to the changing room or went to the car park. Dan Copeland told me to “Fuck Off he wasn’t going anywhere”. A team mate then ushered Dan Copeland to the changing rooms. The game restarted following the half time interval.”

7. As aforementioned, DC accepted the charge he faced and submitted no evidence or statement in response.

Sanction

8. As DC has accepted the Charge, the Commission formally records that the Charge is found proven by admission. The Commission went on to consider sanction.
9. The Commission had regard to the FA Sanction Guidelines and the FA Disciplinary Regulations 2021/22 generally including to both the recommended and minimum sanctions.
10. Regulation 101 of the Disciplinary Regulations provides that a Disciplinary Commission shall impose an immediate suspension within a range as set out:
“101.1 suspension from all football activity for a period of between 56 days and 182 days. The recommended entry point, prior to considering any mitigating or aggravating factors, is 112 days.
101.2 a fine of up to £100, with a mandatory minimum fine of £50.
101.3 an order that the Participant completes an education programme before the time-based suspension is served.”
11. The entry point for a suspension is, therefore, 112 days but I must now also take into account aggravating and mitigating factors.
12. This incident is condemned in the strongest possible terms. That the threatening and abusive language continued after DC was shown a red card is an aggravating factor.
13. As to mitigating factors, DC has pleaded to the charge at the earliest possible stage. I have also considered DC’s disciplinary history; there is nothing relevant to take into account for present purposes, which assists him on mitigation.
14. Taking all the above into account, in my discretion, I believe the aggravating and mitigating factors balance out and therefore remain at a suspension of 112 days. In terms of a fine the sum of £75 is appropriate for

the same reasons. The education course is mandatory. Disciplinary points are levied against Lawrence Weston Saturday to reflect the gravity of the admitted charge.

Outcome

15. For the reasons set out above, the following sanction is imposed:

- i. DC shall receive a suspension of 112 days from all football activity;
- ii. DC shall pay a fine of £75;
- iii. DC shall attend a compulsory online FA Education Course before the time-based suspension is served, failing which he will be suspended from all football activity until such time as he has completed the course; and
- iv. Lawrence Weston Saturday shall receive 7 club disciplinary points.

16. This decision is subject to the right of appeal under the relevant FA rules and Regulations.

Mr Davide Corbino

11 February 2022