

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

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

and

NEIL WALDING

DECISION AND WRITTEN REASONS

Background

1. These are the written reasons for the decision and sanction in relation to a non-personal hearing on 28 March 2022 following charges brought by Gloucestershire FA against Neil Wolding (“**NW**”) (*Case ID: 10773191M*).

The Charge

2. Gloucestershire FA have charged the NW with the following breach of the FA Rules:
 - (a) FA Rule E3 – Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including threatening and / or abusive language and behaviour).
 - (b) The particulars of the charge are that NW said ‘I am going to fucking fill you in’ or similar.
 - (c) NW has admitted the charge.

The Evidence

3. This matter relates to a fixture between Ruardean Hill Rangers First v Sharpness First on 19 March 2022.
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 it 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 County Association Report Form of Carl Williams dated 19 March 2022, whose evidence can be summarised as follows:

- (a) During the second half, the manager of Ruardean Hill kept throwing a ball onto the field of play every time a ball went out of play. I asked the manager to stop doing this as we had two balls on the field of play several times in the game.
- (b) The ball went out of play again on the far side from him and yet again he kicked a ball halfway onto the pitch. I asked him again not to do this and he shouted 'where's the fucking ball gone then'.
- (c) I walked over to him to discuss his conduct and asked for his name. He confirmed his name was NW.
- (d) NW started swearing at me in an aggressive manner and I issued a red card, and asked him to leave the field. NW called me a 'fucking cunt' and a 'fucking wanker' several times.
- (e) A few minutes later, I noticed he was against the barrier and refusing to leave the game. I asked him to and he told me to 'piss off'. After the game, I was in my dressing room and I had several knocks on the door to thank me for the game.
- (f) I received another knock on the door from NW. I asked him to leave my dressing room and confronted me as to his sending off. I told him I was not going to discuss it with him and directed him to leave the room and he then said he was going to 'fucking fill me in, you fucking fat cunt'.
- (g) At this point, I felt threatened for my safety and thought I could be punched. He left and slammed the door.

Decision on Sanction

- 6. As NW has admitted the charge, the Chair considered the appropriate sanction to impose.
- 7. The Chair referred to FA Rules and the Disciplinary Sanctions Guidelines issued by the FA. For this offence, the sanction range is a suspension from all football activity for a period of between 56 days and 182 days. The recommended entry point, prior to considering mitigating or aggravating factors is 112 days. In addition to the football based suspension, this offence carries a fine of up to £100 with a mandatory minimum of £50 and a compulsory FA education course.
- 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 NW's previous disciplinary history and noted that prior to this incident, NW had a clean disciplinary history.
- 10. In accordance with the FA Sanctions Guidelines, the Chair considered the entry point of a 112 day suspension before considering mitigation or aggravating factors, which would necessitate an upward or downward adjustment to the sanction. In this case, the Chair considered that the clean disciplinary history should be credited in mitigation along with the early admission of the charge. However, the Chair considered that the profile of NW as the manager of the club, the lack of cooperation with the FA's investigation and the repeated use of foul and abusive language count as aggravating factors.
- 11. Accordingly, NW is sanctioned as follows:

- (a) A 201 day suspension from football and all football activities, which can be broken down into a 140 day suspension plus a 61 day period to account for the period of football inactivity between June and July.
 - (b) A fine of £75;
 - (c) A mandatory education course to be undertaken online before the suspension has been served, the details of which shall be provided by the FA.
 - (d) 6 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
28 March 2022