



Judicial Committee

Minutes

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 23 September 2020, 7pm-8:35pm

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Louise Dorling (Chair), David Lando, Peter Barnes, Eddie Webb, Ian Yearwood, Karen Greene, Tony Sharples, Kwadjo Adjepong, Jennifer Athill

In attendance: Becky Greaves (Head of Governance - LFA), Carl Long (Investigation Officer - LFA), Isabella Borg (Investigation Officer - LFA)

1. Welcome

L. Dorling welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was confirmed that I. Borg would be taking the minutes for the meeting.

T. Sharples stated that he had internet issues when connecting onto the meeting. Further, that he had received the meeting invite for between 6pm to 8pm. It appeared that E. Webb also had this issue. P. Barnes stated that he did not seem to receive an invite to this meeting at all. Apologies were made.

It was mentioned that the Agenda had been circulated prior to the meeting. A further run through of the Agenda was given.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

It was agreed that L. Dorling would confirm that the minutes of this meeting were approved via email once they had been sent over.

T. Sharples asked whether, further to the previous meeting, there was an answer as to why there had been an increase in discrimination cases. B Greaves answered that we would never fully understand the bigger picture and that it may be because people are better at reporting these incidents or, it could also be due to the BLM movement. B. Greaves stressed that there is no conclusive answer to this question, only that there had been an increase in reporting, not necessarily cases.

B. Greaves stated that P. Bickerton was looking into the use of e-signatures generally and, in respect of approving the minutes. It was once again agreed that the minutes of this meeting would be agreed via email.

3. Update on LFA Governance Team Structure

It was confirmed that B. Greaves would be leaving her role as Head of Governance in December. L.Dorling gave sincere thanks to the work / time B. Greaves had afforded to the Committee whilst in post. It was confirmed that 8th December was scheduled to be B. Greaves last day. B. Greaves expressed that, if possible, she would like to thank everybody / say goodbye in person.

[Jen Athill (LFA Council Member) then joined the call. She apologised for being late. J. Athill was welcomed to her first meeting of the Judicial Committee].

I. Borg was then introduced as the new Disciplinary Investigations Officer by B. Greaves. It was explained that lockdown had prevented I. Borg from starting sooner but that she had integrated well into the team.

It was then stated that the Head of Governance role was to be replaced by a 'Head of Football Services' role. B. Greaves stressed that she didn't know how hands on this person would be with the Committee but that I. Borg and C. Long would keep the Committee updated.

It was then confirmed by B. Greaves that H. Manning had left the LFA. Further, that the discipline team were now without an administrator. It was confirmed that recruitment for a new administrator would commence shortly and, in the meantime, Z. Malik would be assisting the discipline with administrative duties.

[K. Adjepong then entered the meeting. He apologised for being late].

It was confirmed that there were no questions to this agenda item.

4. Internal changes – Departmental Processes

C.Long ran this agenda item. He explained that the discipline processes were now mainly digital. He provided an overview of the Whole Game System and how 'Freshdesk' is now utilised. C.Long emphasised that the use of the WGS assisted with our GDPR obligations as the reports were stored on a FA server (as opposed to being paper based).

C.Long then explained virtual hearings. Stated that although there had been some IT issues this had largely been a positive move. Explained that it allowed for flexibility amongst witnesses and meant there was no need to travel. L.Dorling endorsed that online hearings worked, save for a few IT issues. L.Dorling stressed that generally online hearings made the procedure easier for everybody. It was also stated that the movement of hearings online still allowed for a fair hearing to take place which was the most important thing. It was noted that the LFA would save a lot of money in holding hearings online (i.e. no room hire costs etc).

T. Sharples then asked whether referees were still required to attend personal hearings. He stated that he had done a couple of hearings recently and the referee had not attended. C.Long confirmed that referees were still required to attend. Further, that it was only in exceptional cases that a referee would not be called. C.Long stressed that should a referee fail to attend this could lead to a charge. L.Dorling then outlined that the online process was positive as it should make referees more comfortable giving evidence. T. Sharples stated that he agreed and thought it was a good idea.

C.Long then went through the new 'Traffic Lights' system (excel spreadsheet) which the discipline team use to track misconduct cases and collate statistics for end of season reviews.

[I. Yearwood then apologised and said he had to leave the meeting].

P. Barnes then located the high-profile referee assault case from the spreadsheet and asked whether the Participant Charged had appealed his sanction. It was confirmed that any such matter could not be discussed. It was mentioned that this case had received a lot of press coverage.

P. Barnes asked how this player could be prevented from playing again. It was explained that player registration was done via the WGS and that identification documents were required when signing from a club. It was stated that it may be more difficult to police for small-sided teams because these types of teams were not usually affiliated.

B. Greaves mentioned that this was I. Borg's first case and that it was handled well.

[K. Greene apologised and stated she had to leave the meeting].

J. Athill stated that she had heard that this Participant Charged had received a caution from the police. It was explained by C. Long and B. Greaves that the LFA dealt with this matter from a football perspective and from a different standard of proof (balance of probabilities). It was confirmed that there was no compromise of this investigation.

L.Dorling thanked C. Long for going through our new tracking system.

5. Changes to Regulations

C.Long confirmed that everybody had received a copy of the regulation changes. C.Long directed the committee members to regulation (24).

It was mentioned that in respect of the imposing penalties (minimum sanction) that the commission can deviate from the Sentencing Guidelines in 'exceptional circumstances'. It was agreed that there should be further clarity on what this caveat was / could be defined as i.e. based on a propensity of committing similar offences.

The amendment to youth cases was also noted. Namely, that a child under 12 cannot be at a hearing (as a witness or participant charged).

J. Athill stated that 3 years ago she had been at a match where an under 12 had been racially abusive. Stated that she was concerned that in these instances their behaviour would not be addressed. B. Greaves stated that this amendment did not mean that under 12s could not theoretically be stopped from playing football. B. Greaves stated that education programmes had been used as an effective tool in the past. Especially team education. B. Greaves stated that if a club refused to participate, they could be charged (failure to comply with a rule / regulation of the FA).

It was then noted that the caution fee had increased to £12. D.Lando then expressed that it was unfair that this fee had been increased but not others. C.Long clarified that the administrative fee had been raised to £15.

6. Current case load and investigations – 2020 / 2021 season.

C.Long clarified that there were approximately 48 open cases, including 10 abandoned matches and 13 discrimination charges.

B. Greaves stated that from pre-season friendlies there were few misconduct cases reported. B. Greaves stated that she presumed this was because referees were only reporting very serious cases. It was then noted that there had been a lot of issues with WGS which may have caused an issue in the reporting of cases. B. Greaves explained that LFA's staff had been advised to inform referees to still report cases (even if unable to do so via WGS).

C.Long then confirmed there were only had 5 personal hearings left to hear from last season which were currently on hold as they needed to be conducted in person.

L.Dorling stated that the statistics C. Long had given were very positive. B. Greaves mentioned that C. Long and I. Borg had been working very hard.

B. Greaves stated that so far there had been approximately 934 cautions and 102 red cards.

P. Barnes then stated that he had, had a recent red card appeal and the referee had not submitted a report. P. Barnes stated that this had caused confusion as to who had been sent off. L.Dorling explained that there was no longer an obligation to submit a report. C.Long added that the burden was on the club to prove there was a 'clear and obvious' error.

7. Appeals – 2020 / 2021 season.

C.Long confirmed there had been no appeals from the FA so far. Stated there was one appeal outstanding from last season. Explained that the player had not attended the hearing. It was outlined that a National Panel would conduct a review as to what went wrong.

C.Long then stated that we had one pending league appeal. B. Greaves then confirmed that she would be making contact shortly to put together a panel for a cup appeal.

8. Training and trained panel members update.

B. Greaves confirmed that there had been no new training programme released by the FA. It was confirmed that M. Ives had returned to the FA in a temporary capacity as of 1 September and would be helping with this training programme.

B. Greaves expressed that the committee were more than welcome to train as panel members. Noted that hands were tied until the training programme was released. Stated that if qualifications were expiring then any panel members must attend any training sessions. It was commented that these should be online.

Action point: B. Greaves to circulate training panel members information once released.

C.Long commented that London had a key interest in the diversity of our panel members. He noted that London is a diverse City and our panel members should reflect this. L.Dorling commented that she had, had the pleasure of having an all-female panel on a case recently.

B. Greaves confirmed that I. Borg and C. Long would go through the training process with the committee.

9. Discipline Panel Member Training – October 2020.

Confirmed that this would take place on 14 October 2020 and an Agenda would be circulated.

B. Greaves asked if any of the committee members had any ideas for what they would like to be covered. B. Greaves stated that the new youth regulations would be covered. Stated that it would also be worthwhile going through some fictitious misconduct cases so members could gain a better understanding as to what we do, why we raise certain charges, common themes in misconduct cases etc.

D.Lando asked whether we could have a mock-style hearing on Teams. B. Greaves mentioned that M. Ives was against this idea as it encouraged bad habits from panel members.

Action plan: B. Greaves to send out invites to training session 1 week before and the Agenda to follow. L.Dorling stated she was happy to help with the Agenda.

It was stated that going forward, once B. Greaves had left, it was likely that I. Borg and C. Long would run the sessions. L.Dorling stated she was happy to provide support where / if needed.

10. AOB

L.Dorling once again extended her sincere thanks to B. Greaves. Stated that B. Greaves had been a revelation over the past 5 years. It was mentioned that this would be the last meeting before the council election in November.

T. Sharples mentioned that he did not need to re-apply to be a council member.

K.Adjepong then mentioned that there had been a lot of changes and he concerned that committee members would no longer receive the support they had previously had. B. Greaves stated that M. Ives had provided us with a lot of support beforehand but did not mean that we would not be able to

cope without it. Stated that it would probably align us better now with the support received by other counties.

There were no further questions.

B. Greaves stated that she wanted to say thank you to all committee members and especially to L. Dorling for all of her help.

Date of Next Meeting: 20th January 2021 @ 7pm via Microsoft Teams

Date of Next Full Discipline Panel Training: 14th October @ 7pm. L. Dorling thanked everyone for their attendance.

Name of Chair: _____

Signed by Chair: _____

Date: __/__/__