

FA NATIONAL SERIOUS CASES PANEL DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION
The Football Association on behalf of

OXFORDSHIRE FA

V

HARRY REGAN (6059)

Case ID: 11603722M

WRITTEN REASONS
Factual Background and Chronology

1. These are the Reasons for the decision of the Disciplinary Commission which was considered by a Chair Alone Commission on Wednesday 28th February 2024.
2. The Commission member was Keith Allen (CFA National Chairs Panel) Chair.
3. The following is a record of the main points which the Discipline Commission considered.
4. The charge in question arose from a game between Wallingford & Crowmarsh FC U-16 and Kidlington Youth FC U-16, played on 4th February 2024.
5. **CHARGE 1** By letter dated 9th February 2024, **HARRY REGAN** a player for Kinlington Youth FC was charged with a contravention of FA Rule E3.1 Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including physical contact or attempted physical contact and threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour).
6. Details of the charge: "This refers to the allegation that Mr Regan pushed the match official or similar."
7. By return of the charge letter dated 16th February 2024, **HARRY REGAN entered a GUILTY plea** and requested the case be heard by correspondence in his absence.
8. FA Disciplinary Processes/General Provisions Section 1 Rule E3.1 provides for:
A participant shall at all times act in the best interests of the game and shall not act in any manner which is improper or brings the game into dispute or use any one, or a combination of, violent conduct, serious foul play, threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting words or behaviour.

EVIDENCE

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 this case.

9. The Commission had before it the following items to consider:

a) A report from the match referee Benjamin Richards:

“ After the final whistle I was approached by Harry Regan so told me I had lost his team the game. I told him I had explained all of my decisions on the field and politely asked him to walk away as he was talking in an aggressive manner. At this point he forcefully pushed me away with a hand to my chest. I called him back over, asked for his name and issued a straight read card. I have sent video footage of this incident taking place recorded by a spectator.”

b) A comprehensive statement Duncan Wynn, manager of Kidlington FC U-16:

“A regrettable incident occurred involving a 16-year-old Kidlington player, Harry REGAN and the appointed match referee. The player, Harry REGAN was observed pushing the referee, during a discussion after the game had concluded and participants were leaving the field of play.

Sequence of Events: Harry Regan started the game as a substitute and joined the game after 25 minutes.

An incident took place approximately 15 minutes into the Second Half of the game whereby the Kidlington goalkeeper was caught late by a Crowmarsh player challenging for the ball. As a result of this a number of players from both sides became involved in a minor skirmish whereby players were pushing and goading each other. The Kidlington goalkeeper was booked for pushing the player involved in the late challenge. This incident seemed to turn the game rather unsavoury with players trying to wind each other up and over exaggerating and challenging every foul.

At one point during a break in play I called all of my players over and gave them a stern talk about focussing on the game and not being drawn into goading or silly behaviour.

About 20 minutes into the second half a free kick was awarded against Harry Regan for a foul. The subsequent free kick led to a goal for Crowmarsh. Harry clearly did not agree with the referee's decision and was being vocal (no foul language and not aggressive in nature).

Due to Harry's demeanour and focus on the decision, I decided to substitute him. When he came off he was not happy with me as he had started as a substitute. I explained to him that he had lost focus and it was not acceptable to be challenging the decision.

The game finished with Crowmarsh winning 3-2 after a frantic finish where Kidlington hit the post in the very last minute.

Crowmarsh players were elated, Kidlington players were down and I could see a number of verbal confrontations taken place as players went to shake hands. I

entered the field of play and ushered our players back to our technical area telling them to behave and 'keep it zipped'.

As I walked towards the referee I saw Harry Regan speaking to him and saw him push the referee's arm in a pushing / sweep motion. There was very little contact and the referee stepped back. Harry immediately started walking away. The referee then produced a red card. The referee was very calm and composed and handled the situation very well. I briefly spoke to the referee before ushering all my remaining players back to the technical area.

I then addressed my players and expressed my disappointment at the behaviour shown and in particular what I had seen Harry do. I made it clear how upset and angry I was that a Kidlington player had done that knowing the standards we uphold.

I sent Harry away to his dad in the car park and finished speaking to the players about behaviour in the game in general.

I then went and spoke in more detail with the referee, ensuring he was ok and offering my apologies for what had happened.

I informed him I would be reporting the matter to the club committee and assured him it would be addressed.

The referee informed me that a Crowmarsh Parent had a video of the incident.

I am aware that the player faces disciplinary action from the league, which will include a lengthy suspension and fines. Once this is finalised the team and club will consider any additional sanctions needed.

Harry only joined Kidlington at the start of the season and at this time I feel it unlikely he will be asked to sign on again.

I cannot in any way condone Harry's behaviour and he is fully aware of the standards of behaviour expected which have been outlined clearly throughout the season.

On the evening of Sunday 4th I rang Harry's dad and had a long chat about the incident. Harry was also on the call. Harry was very remorseful and sorry for what he had done.

Harry's dad indicated there was a lot going on at home and that Harry was finding things difficult.

Harry was apologetic and fully admitted what he did and accepted that it was completely unacceptable.

I understand that this incident involving a player pushing a referee is deeply concerning and has no place in football. Immediate action was taken to address the misconduct, and steps are being taken to continue to educate and prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

I have been coaching at Kidlington Youth for 18 years and can absolutely state that this incident is completely out of step with mine and the club's ethos.

I have previously taken a team from u7 to adult football and recall that Under 16s was the most difficult season and this has proved to be the case second time around.

Players are growing into adulthood and can be very highly-strung and prone to petulant outbursts. This is also the year of GCSE exams adding additional pressure.

The discipline record of the team overall has been good this season. We have received 1 previous red card (2 yellows) this season.

In summary, I feel that the incident with the referee was born out of frustration and was a momentary, petulant act with no malice or intent. Harry is sorry for his actions, regrets it immensely and aware he has let himself and the club down. A ban from football is inevitable and this will be a tough punishment for Harry as he loves playing and rarely misses training or matches.

There was nothing either myself, or my assistants, could have done to prevent the incident but we will use it to enforce the learning and messaging around conduct and respect to all our players and parents."

c) A video of the incident, taken by a spectator.

STANDARD OF PROOF

The applicable standard of proof required for his case is the civil standard of the balance of probability. This standard means, the Commission would be satisfied that an event occurred if they considered that, on the evidence, it was more likely than not to have happened.

DELIBERATION

10. The Commission reminded themselves that the charge against Harry Regan was:

FA Rule E3 – Improper Conduct against a Match Official (including physical contact or attempted physical contact and threatening and/or abusive language/behaviour).

11. With Harry Regan pleading guilty to the charge, the Commission were only tasked with imposing sanction, after considering all evidence.

12. The Commission considered at length, gave due weight to all written evidence, noting:

- a) The report of the referee, which was clear and concise, detailing events as they unfolded.
- b) The video of the incident which corroborated witness statements and evidence.
- c) The impressive responsible attitude and actions of Duncan Wynn manager of Kiddlington FC U-16, in the aftermath of the incident and the excellent statement submitted, in which he demonstrates the ethos of the club, which does him and his club great credit
- d) The Commission were disappointed to receive no statement or direct apology from Harry Regan himself, although his manager does describe contrition after the event by the player.
- e) Mitigation was given for the Players clean disciplinary record over the last five years, which was to his credit.
- f) Mitigation was given for the acceptance of the charge by the player, which was to his credit.

13. However, the Commission also noted the seriousness of the charge and that physical conduct of any kind cannot be accepted.

14. With the charge being accepted the Commission were tasked with imposing sanction.

SANCTION

15. In the case of, **HARRY REGAN** the Commission referred to FA Sanction Guidelines, which for a charge of FA Rule E3. Improper Conduct against a match official (including Physical Contact or Attempted Physical Contact and Threatening and/or Abusive Language/Behaviour), which recommends a sanction of:

“A suspension from all football activities for a period of between 112 days and 2 years, the recommended entry point, prior to considering any mitigating or aggravating factors is 182 days. A fine of up to £150, with a mandatory minimum of £75. An order that the participant completes an education programme before the time-based suspension is served or within 28 days of the Disciplinary Commission’s decision, whichever is the later.

16. Having giving due weight to all evidence and mitigation, the Commission decided to impose a sanction on **HARRY REGAN of a suspension from all football activities of 140 days, a severe warning as to future conduct, a fine of £90, with ten (10) disciplinary penalty points to be recorded against the record of the club. This suspension is to be backdated to the date the interim suspension was imposed.**

17. **As this case relates to a proven case of physical contact against a Match Official, HARRY REGAN is required to attend a face-to-face education course before the suspension is served, or a sine die suspension will be imposed.**

18. 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.

Keith Allen (Commission Chair)

28/02/24