

Football Association Disciplinary Commission

The Football Association on behalf of Oxfordshire FA

V

Sean Ayres – Case ID: 10654043 M

WRITTEN REASONS

1. This is a hearing summary that includes written reasons for the decision of the disciplinary commission (the commission) which sat alone on Thursday 20th January 2022, commencing at 13.35 pm.
2. The commission was a non-personal hearing chaired by Bill Stoneham (National Serious Case Panel).
3. The following is a written record of the main points considered by the commission. It is a summary of the main evidence presented and is not intended to refer to all the points made in the evidence presented. The absence in these reasons of any particular point, or piece of evidence, should not imply that the commission did not take into account any such point or evidence. For the avoidance of doubt, the commission carefully considered all the evidence that was submitted.
4. The charge in question arose following a game between Ridgeway Royals First FC v Stadhampton First FC in the Oxfordshire Sam Waters Cup. This fixture was played on Sunday, 7th November 2021.
5. Oxfordshire FA issued a charge letter dated 6th January 2022. In this letter it states that: Sean Ayres is hereby charged with a breach of FA Rule E3 Improper Conduct against a Match Official including threatening and/or abusive language in respect of the above fixture. It is alleged that during the first half of the match, the club appointed assistant referee (Sean Ayres) flagged for a goal kick, a decision that was overruled by the match referee. In response, Sean Ayres aggressively threw the flag to the floor. The match referee stopped the game, approached Sean Ayres and relieved him of his duties. Sean Ayres refused to give his name when asked to do so and replied to the match referee saying: 'Fuck off' and 'I'll knock you out'. Information in

the case papers indicate that Sean Ayres is a registered player with Stadhampton FC.

6. Oxfordshire FA provided the following evidence in relation to the charge:
 - I. Reports and information supplied by Nathan Fuller – (the referee);
 - II. email statements from Stadhampton FC.
7. On 7th January 2022, Stadhampton FC provided a reply to Oxfordshire FA accepting the charge. No correspondence was received from Sean Ayres prior to the commission.
8. As Sean Ayres had accepted the charge raised against him, the commission was solely concerned with determining the sanctions to be imposed. For clarity, it should be noted that having examined all the evidence, the commission was content to accept the plea offered by Sean Ayres.
9. The submissions from the referee confirmed what Sean Ayres said and his actions in throwing down his flag and refusing to give his name. The referee added that when he removed Sean Ayres, he (Sean Ayres) 'watched from the sidelines without further incident'. Another person associated with Stadhampton FC assumed the duties of assistant referee and the game was duly completed.
10. Stadhampton FC merely accepted the charge against Sean Ayres. No other relevant written communication was received from either the club, or from Sean Ayres.
11. Sean Ayres' disciplinary record over the last five years was considered. It was noted that apart from the incident reported in this fixture, he had an unblemished record.
12. The only mitigation that could be considered was that Sean Ayres has a hitherto unblemished disciplinary record and that once he had been removed from his duties, he was no more than a passive observer of the game. The referee was able to complete the fixture.
13. The aggravating factors identified included Sean Ayres':
 - I. use of offensive language directed at the referee;
 - II. aggressive and threatening demeanour directed at the referee;
 - III. lack of respect for the referee's property;
 - IV. direct threat to inflict serious physical harm on the referee;
 - V. complete and utter lack of remorse.
 - VI. The lack of any statement from Stadhampton FC was deemed unhelpful.

14. Having considered all the facts in this case, the commission determined that the following sanctions be imposed on Sean Ayres:

- Suspension from all football activities for 140 days;
- a fine of £80;
- imposition of nine penalty points;
- Sean Ayres will be required to complete an online education programme before the time-based suspension is served, or within 28 days of the commission's decision, whichever is the later.

15. There is a right of appeal against this decision in accordance with the relevant provisions set out in the Rules and Regulation of the Football Association.

Bill Stoneham

Chairperson

20th January 2022.