

**Football Association Regulatory Commission (the ‘Commission’) in the matter of a charge of Misconduct brought against Sam Morsy (‘SM’) of Ipswich Town Football Club (‘ITFC’) for an Incident on the Field of Play unseen by the Match**

**Officials but captured on video.**

**Regulatory Commission Decision**

1. These are the written reasons for a decision made by an Independent Regulatory Commission which sat on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
2. The Commission members were Mr. Stuart Ripley (Chairman), Mr. Lawrie Sanchez and Mr. Ray Olivier, who are all Independent Football Members of the FA’s Judicial Panel.
3. Mr. John Edmunds, of the FA’s Judicial Services, acted as Secretary to the Regulatory Commission.
4. The following is a summary of the principal submissions and evidence provided to the Commission. It does not purport to contain reference to all points made, however the absence in these reasons of any particular point, or submission, should not imply that the Commission did not take such point, or submission, 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.

5. The incident in question occurred during the Ipswich Town FC v Accrington Stanley FC, Football League 1 fixture, that took place on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2022.

6. The Match Referee, Geoff Eltringham, sent an Email on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2022 to The FA. Mr Eltringham wrote, *“After reviewing footage from my game 22/1/22 I would like to bring the following incident to your attention. 26:45 Ipswich Town player Sam Morsy appears to strike his opponent in the face off the ball which is a potential act of violent conduct. The incident was not witnessed by any match official at the time so no disciplinary action was taken. I had already submitted my misconduct report before viewing the footage hence this email”*.

7. On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022, as per the FA Regulations, a video clip of the alleged incident was sent by The FA to former Referee’s Mike Mullarkey, Eddie Wolstenholme and Steve Dunn who were asked to view the video and to comment on what action, if any, they believed would have been warranted by the Match Referee. All three confirmed that a dismissal would have been the appropriate action had the incident been seen by the Referee.

8. On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022, The FA charged SM with misconduct for a breach of FA Rule E1.1 alleging that his behaviour in or around the 27th minute of the fixture constituted violent conduct.

9. The Football Association relied on the following evidence:

- i. Email from the Match Referee, Mr. G. Eltringham, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2022;

- ii. Email correspondence between Mr. R. Marsh of The FA and PGMOL Senior Referee Coaches, Mr. E. Wolstenholme, Mr. S. Dunn and Mr. M. Mullarkey, dated 24th January 2022; and
- iii. A video clip of the incident.

10. SM replied to the Charge on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022. SM denied the Charge. Attached to SM's Reply Form was a letter from Mr. Stuart Hayton, ITFC Club Secretary, setting out the Club's position on the incident. A second video clip of the incident was also provided to the Commission by the Club.

11. The Commission members viewed the video evidence provided with the written submissions of both parties in mind.

12. It was not easy to make out what had occurred from the footage provided by ITFC but it could be seen that SM raised his right arm and made contact with the Accrington player.

13. However, from the footage provided by The FA, all three Commission members felt that they could comfortably say that SM had deliberately struck his opponent in the face with his right hand as they came together. It was, to the mind of the Commission, clear that SM had rapidly jabbed his hand out towards the face of his opponent.

14. The Commission considered SM's actions to be a 'serious missed incident' of violent conduct and as such found the charge against SM proven.

15. The automatic penalty that applies in this case is a 4-match suspension.

16. This decision is not subject to an Appeal in accordance with the FA's Rules and Regulations.

**Stuart Ripley**

Regulatory Commission Chairman

25<sup>th</sup> January 2022