

Football Association Regulatory Commission (the ‘Commission’) in the matter of charges brought against Ali Uzunhasanoglu (“AU”) for multiple breaches of

The FA’s Betting Rules.

Regulatory Commission Decision

1. These are the written reasons for a decision made by an Independent Regulatory Commission which convened by Microsoft Teams on 31 January 2024.
2. The Commission members were Jonathan Rennie (Chairperson), Tony Agana and Alison Royston.
3. Mr Marc Medas of the FA Judicial Services, acted as Secretary to the Regulatory Commission. This was a personal hearing and AU attended with support from Liz Elsom, Head of Football Operations at Peterborough United FC. The FA were represented by Madeleine Deasy, Regulatory Advocate.
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.

Background

5. Since August 2014, under the FA's Betting Rules, a Participant at step 4 and above is prohibited from betting on the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect of, or occurrence in a football match or competition; or any other matter concerning or related to football anywhere in the world, including for example and without limitation, the transfer of players, employment of managers, team selection or disciplinary matters.
6. AU's football career during the relevant period under consideration was as follows and during this time he was principally employed as a goalkeeping coach:
 - a. 2018/2019 - Contracted to Stevenage FC (League Two)
 - b. 2019/2020 – as above and at Oldham Athletic FC (League Two)
 - c. 2020-2021 – Contracted to Peterborough United FC (League One)
 - d. 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 and 2023-2024– as above
7. AU was identified by The FA as having breached The FA's betting Rules when a Betting Operator shared AU's account activity with the FA.
8. The FA then contacted all UK based/registered betting companies and requested any accounts in the name of AU that showed breaches of The FA's Betting Rules. This resulted in various betting accounts being disclosed which the FA then interrogated for accuracy before meeting with AU and

discussing the accounts with him and then finalising the charges against AU.

9. The FA interviewed AU on 27 November 2023. The terms of that interview were available to the Regulatory Commission who considered that together with a statement dated 13 December 2023 from Tom Astley, Betting Integrity Investigator and the betting schedules showing all of the bets forming the charge.
10. At the interview on 27 November 2023, AU indicated that he did have knowledge of the FA betting rules and had been trying to manage his betting by placing very small football bets only in the hope of reducing down [REDACTED]. He recognised that he had [REDACTED] and explained the consequences that it had on his family life and the emotional problems he experienced. AU was very open in describing his betting patterns and was regretful of his actions and indicated that he [REDACTED].
11. AU accepted placing bets and took full responsibility and was open to the idea of seeking support from Sporting Chance to help him [REDACTED].
12. At the FA interview, Tom Astley explained to AU that certain bets had particular aggravating features. In particular, where bets are placed on one's own club then this is treated more seriously and the FA will scrutinise whether the bet is placed on one's own club to win or to lose.

13. There were 14 bets that AU placed on his own club to win with a total stake of £4.05 and a net loss of £3.30. Those bets were all accumulators at very low value and included:
- a) 4 bets on Peterborough United FC to win;
 - b) 4 bets on Oldham Athletic to win;
 - c) 3 bets on Stevenage FC to win;
 - d) 1 bet on Oldham Athletic to win and both teams to score 1 time;
 - e) 1 bet on Stevenage FC to win and both teams to score 1 time;
 - f) 1 bet on Peterborough United FC to draw.
14. The FA interviewer asked AU about those bets on his own club to win in finer detail. AU was not able to explain why he made those bets or his thought pattern in doing so. The interview then proceeded to look at AU's betting pattern across his own league and cup competitions that AU's teams were playing in. There were 499 identified bets. It was explained to AU that these were also aggravated bets although to a lesser extent than those bets on his own team to win. Again, AU was not able to explain his thought process in placing those bets.
15. Following analysis of the betting accounts that were supplied to The FA by the bookmakers and the FA's interview with AU, The FA charged AU on 20 December 2023 with charges of Misconduct under FA Rule E8 in respect of a total of 1,144 bets placed over 6 seasons (relating to season 2018/2019 and then successive seasons up until season 2023/24). It was alleged that each bet was a separate breach of FA Rule E8.

16. The overall amount staked across the 6 seasons was £387.53. The returns on this were £19.38. This led to a net total loss of £368.15. On analysis of the betting accounts, it was clear there were certain bets that were more aggravated as outlined in paragraphs 13 and 14 above.
17. AU admitted the charges and requested that the case be dealt with as a personal hearing and he duly attended to present his explanations.

The FA Betting Rules

18. It is appropriate at this stage to set out by reference to the FA's Sanction Guidelines, the various types of bets which are prohibited in ascending order of seriousness, and the sanction guidelines themselves, which clearly envisage consideration where appropriate of a financial penalty as well as a 'sports sanction':
 - 1) Bet placed on any aspect of any football match, anywhere in the world, but not involving participant's club competitions.
Sanction – warning/fine; suspension 'n/a'
 - 2) Bet placed on participant's competition but not involving his club [including spot bet]
Sanction – fine; suspension n/a where participant has no connection with the club bet on.

3) Bet placed on own team to win.

Sanction – fine; suspension 0-6 months to be determined by factors below.

4) Bet placed on own team to lose.

Sanction – fine; suspension 6 months – life to be determined by factors below*

19. The Guidelines continue : *The factors to be considered when determining appropriate sanctions will include the following:

- i Overall perception of impact of bet[s] on fixture/game integrity;
- ii Player played or did not play;
- iii Number of bets;
- iv Size of bets;
- v Facts and circumstances surrounding pattern of betting;
- vi Actual stake and amount possible to win;
- vii Personal circumstances;
- viii Previous record [any previous breach of betting rules will be considered as a highly aggravating factor]
- ix Experience of the participant;
- x Assistance to the process and acceptance of the charge.

20. As noted in the Appeal Case of *The Football Association and Chris Maguire*, whilst the Guidelines are not intended to override the discretion of Regulatory Commissions to impose such sanctions as they consider appropriate having regard to the particular facts and circumstances of a case, the Guidelines state clearly that *'in the interests of consistency it is anticipated that the guidelines will be applied unless the applicable case has some particular characteristic[s] which justifies a greater or lesser sanction'*.

21. They continue: *'The assessment of the seriousness of the offence will need to take account of the factors set out above.'* And, after addressing the serious aggravating feature of betting against one's own club or on the 'contrivance' of a particular situation therein, the guidelines continue *'a further serious aggravating feature will be where the participant played or was involved in the match on which the bet was made'*.
22. Those are the Guidelines which the Commission was bound to consider in deciding upon the appropriate sanction.

Personal Hearing – Representations

23. The Commission and Ms Deasy asked AU questions about his betting volumes, patterns and behaviours and he answered in a manner consistent with the documentary paperwork.
24. The Commission explored the question of whether AU [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and how he was currently addressing that if so. He said that he attended virtual Zoom sessions with Sporting Chance and this was an open ended relationship because he considered he needed ongoing support. It was clear that his current employer is supporting him and that is to be commended.
25. AU said that he had blocked his betting accounts from his mobile phone and closed his betting accounts. He was trying hard to avoid the retail betting shops on the High Street and was committed to stopping betting.

He confirmed that his finances were now in a better order than before and he did not have outstanding loans or financial problems from his betting.

Deliberation and Sanction

26. The Commission considers breaches of the FA's Betting Rules to be a serious matter. It is important that the FA's Betting Rules are upheld in order to protect the overall integrity of the game.
27. The Commission noted the FA's Sanction Guidelines and considered all of the factors that are set out in the Guidelines in order to come to a fair and proportionate sanction given the circumstances.
28. The first step the Commission undertook was to identify the category of breach according to the FA guidelines. It was clear that AU had bet on his own club to win. It follows that the entry point was that which states in the guidance "*bet placed on own team to win.*"
29. Having identified that "entry point" in the FA guidance, the Commission were then required to look at the mitigating and aggravating factors listed in the guidance and noted at paragraph 19 above.
30. As AU was not a player then he did not play in the matches he bet upon and the Commission was not clear if he attended those matches and/or his degree of influence over those games.
31. In deliberating on sanction, the Commission considered the total number of bets placed; the duration over which the bets had been placed; the amount of money staked; AU's experience and assistance in the

proceedings and the fact he had no previous misconduct offence of a similar nature on his record, covering the current season and previous five full seasons. The Commission acknowledged that AU admitted the charge

[REDACTED]

32. The Commission considered that the aggravated bets where AU bet on his own team to win were small and amounted to £4.05 only and a total of 14 bets. They were also all part of larger accumulator bets and not on his own team in isolation. This was a significant mitigating factor in his favour.
33. Against that, his actions reflect poorly on the game of football and especially from someone in a position of influence who players, including in the Academy, would look up to and take guidance from.
34. Having taken all the guidance into consideration the Commission felt that the following sanction was proportionate and appropriate in all the circumstances:
 - a. AU is fined the sum of £250 ; and
 - b. AU is suspended from All Football and Football related activity for One (1) Month.
35. Having determined the appropriate penalty for the breaches in the present case, the Regulatory Commission considered that there were clear and compelling reasons to suspend the imposition of the aforementioned sporting sanction, namely that:

- a. AU had demonstrated a clear awareness of the seriousness of his wrongdoing and had been open and transparent about [REDACTED]. The Panel recognised [REDACTED] that he showed a willingness and determination to continue on that path.
 - b. It was felt that suspending the sporting sanction would not undermine the seriousness of the offence or the sanction but would instead allow the suspended sanction to act as a deterrent against future misconduct and a further incentive to AU to continue to address his issues.
 - c. The aggravated bets which placed AU into the category of a 0-6 month suspension amounted to just over 1% of the total bets placed, and all were as part of larger accumulator bets.
36. It follows that the one month ban is **not** an immediate ban and instead shall be suspended on condition that AU does not commit any further FA betting breaches in the period up until 30 June 2025. In the event of any such breach the suspended period of suspension will be activated with effect from the date of the final determination of the proceedings before the Regulatory Commission dealing with the new breaches, in addition to any penalty for the new breaches imposed by the Regulatory Commission.
37. This decision is subject to Appeal in accordance with the FA's Rules and Regulations.

Jonathan Rennie

Regulatory Commission Chairperson

31 January 2024