

**Football Association Regulatory Commission (the 'Commission') in
the matter of an FA Rule E20 charge of Misconduct brought against
Sheffield United Football Club ('SUFC').**

Regulatory Commission Decision

1. These are the written reasons for a decision made by an Independent Regulatory Commission which sat on Thursday 22nd August 2024.
2. The Commission members were Mr. Stuart Ripley (Chairman), Mr. Michael O'Brien and Mr. Ken Monkou, who are all Independent Football Members of the FA's Judicial Panel.
3. Mr. Marc Medas, 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.

Background

5. The incident in question took place during the Sheffield United FC v Wrexham FC, EFL League Cup fixture on 13th August 2024.

6. In his Extraordinary Incident Report the Referee, Mr. Keith Stroud, wrote *“After 90+4 minutes following a goal scored by Wrexham FC, a number of players became involved in a confrontation within the goal. Two players were cautioned for their part in this incident, but I am highlighting this incident due to the mass confrontation that took place”*

7. By way of a letter dated 16th August 2024 SUFC was charged with Misconduct for a breach of FA Rule E20.1 in respect of the above fixture. (‘Charge Letter’).

8. The Charge Letter read: *“Sheffield United FC is hereby charged with Misconduct in respect of a breach of FA Rule E20.1 during the above fixture. It is alleged that in or around the 94th minute of the fixture, Sheffield United FC failed to ensure that its players did not behave in a way which is improper and/or provocative.”*

9. The Football Association designated this as a ‘Non-Standard’ Case due to a previous proven breach of FA Rule E20 in a fixture against Leeds United FC on 7th February 2024.

10. The FA relied on the following evidence:

- i. Report of the Match Referee, Mr. K. Stroud, dated 13th August 2024;
- ii. Video clips of the incident.
- iii. The FA's 'Essential Information for Clubs 2024-25' document.

11. SUFC, by way of the FA's Disciplinary Proceedings Reply Form dated 20th August 2024, elected to admit the Charge and have it dealt with by way of a Paper Hearing. Attached to the Reply Form was a letter from the SUFC Club Secretary, Donna Fletcher.

12. With the Charge admitted the Commission's task was to impose a sanction that is fair and proportionate in all the circumstances.

13. The Commission considered carefully the video footage of the incident and noted that every SUFC player became involved in the Mass Confrontation to some degree. That said, the Commission considered the levels of aggression shown by the SUFC players, across the incident, to have been of a fairly low level.

14. The Commission were informed that SUFC had eight (8) proven E20 charges on its previous five-year disciplinary record, the details of which are found below:

- i. 07/02/24 -Leeds United FC - £7,500 fine;
- ii. 25/02/23 – Barnsley FC - £3,000 fine;

- iii. 13/01/23 – Crystal Palace FC - £2,000 fine;
- iv. 01/11/22 – Bristol City FC - £15,000 fine;
- v. 22/10/22 – Norwich City FC - £7,500 fine;
- vi. 15/10/22 – Blackpool FC - £12,500 fine;
- vii. 07/03/22 – Derby County FC - £1,250 fine; and
- viii. 18/01/22 – Swansea City FC - £1,250 fine

15. The Commission noted that where a club admits a Standard E20.1 charge, at Championship level, the club is fined the sum of £5,000.

16. In coming to its decision on the level of fine to be imposed in this particular case the Commission took into consideration the following, non-exhaustive, factors:

- i. The high number of SUFC players involved;
- ii. The fairly low levels of aggression shown by the SUFC players;
- iii. The time the incident took to unfold;
- iv. SUFC's admission of the charge and contents of its letter dated 20th August 2024;
- v. The fine applicable to a Standard/Admitted Charge at EFL Championship level (£5,000);
- vi. SUFC's very poor previous disciplinary record - both short and long term;

17. Having taken into consideration all the aggravating and mitigating factors of the case the Commission decided that SUFC should be fined the sum of £8500.

18. This decision is subject to Appeal in accordance with the FA's Rules and Regulations.

Stuart Ripley

Regulatory Commission Chairman

27th August 2024