

Football Association Regulatory Commission (the ‘Commission’) in

the matter of an FA Rule E20.1 charge of Misconduct brought

against Chelsea FC (‘CFC’).

Regulatory Commission Decision

1. These are the written reasons for a decision made by an Independent Regulatory Commission which sat on Monday 19th January 2026.
2. The Commission members were Mr. Stuart Ripley (Chairman), Mr. Ray Olivier and Mr. Terry Burton, who are all Independent Football Members of the FA’s Judicial Panel.
3. Mr. Conrad Gibbons, 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.

Relevant Regulations

5. FA Rule E20.1 states: *'Each Affiliated Association, Competition and Club shall be responsible for ensuring that its Directors, players, officials, employees, servants and representatives, attending any match do not behave in a way which is improper, offensive, violent, threatening, abusive, indecent, insulting or provocative'.*

Background

6. The incident in question took place during the Chelsea FC v Aston Villa FC ('AVFC'), Premier League fixture on 27th December 2025.

7. In his Extraordinary Incident Report dated 25th January 2025, the Referee, Mr. Stuart Atwell wrote: *"Following the match, I was made aware of an allegation that an unidentified member of the Chelsea technical area had thrown a plastic drinks bottle in the direction of the Aston Villa technical area. The alleged incident occurred immediately after the final whistle".*

8. The FA investigated the incident, requesting by email that CFC identify the person who had thrown the bottle. CFC were provided with footage of the bottle being thrown, however following CFC's own investigations, neither The FA nor CFC has been unable to identify the specific person responsible for throwing the bottle.

9. Nonetheless, by way of a letter dated 7th January 2026 CFC was charged with Misconduct for a breach of FA Rule E20.1 in respect of the above fixture.

(‘Charge Letter’). The Charge Letter read: *‘Chelsea FC is hereby charged with Misconduct for a breach of FA Rule E20.1 in respect of the above fixture. It is alleged that following completion of the above fixture, Chelsea FC failed to ensure that its players personnel positioned in or around the technical area did not behave in a manner which is improper and/or provocative and/or abusive.’*

10. The FA designated this as a Non-Standard Case as the particular facts of the alleged Misconduct are of a serious and/or unusual nature.

11. The FA relied on the following evidence:

- i. *Report from the Match Official, Mr. S. Atwell, dated 27 December 2025;*
- ii. *Image of technical area;*
- iii. *Email correspondence between The FA and Mr. D. Barnard, CFC Club Secretary dated 29-30 December 2025;*
- iv. *Removal of Fastrack Regulations correspondence dated 31 December 2025;*
- v. *Email correspondence between Mr. D. Barnard, CFC Club Secretary to The FA dated 7 January 2026;*
- vi. *Essential Information for Clubs 2025/26 Document; and*
- vii. *Video clips of the incident.*

12. CFC, by way of the FA’s Disciplinary Proceedings Reply Form dated 12th January 2026, elected to admit the Charge and have it dealt with by way of a Paper Hearing. CFC submitted a letter including mitigation for consideration of the Commission which was considered in full.

Sanction Decision of Commission

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

15. The Commission was informed that CFC had four (4) previous proven E20 charges on its disciplinary record over the relevant preceding 5-year period. Those charges were sanctioned as follows:

- *E20 (Surrounding Match Official) v Liverpool FC. 28 August 2021. Premier League. (Non-Standard) - £25,000;*
- *E20 (Mass Confrontation) – Category 2 v Tottenham Hotspur FC. 21 October 2023. U18 Premier League Cup. (Non-Standard) £3,500;*
- *E20 (Mass Confrontation) v Nottingham Forest FC. 6 October 2024. Premier League. (Non-Standard) - £40,000; and*
- *E20 (Surrounding Match Official) v Ipswich Town FC. 30 December 2024. Premier League. (Non-Standard). £40,000.*

Sanction Guidelines

16. The Commission noted the sanction guidelines in relation to Non-Standard breaches of FA Rule E20 is set out in the '*Essential Information for Clubs Season 2025/26*' booklet.

17. Pursuant to the guidelines, the maximum fine for clubs in the Premier League in respect of a first Non-Standard breach of FA Rule E20 is £250,000, with an '*Entry Point*' of £125,000.

18. The Commission considered the throwing of the bottle at or into the AVFC technical area as a very serious incident. The video footage shows the bottle coming out of the CFC dugout and travelling at speed (indicating its weight) into the AVFC technical area. The bottle passes very close to the head of an AVFC substitute and lands in the AVFC technical area. The act was dangerous and could have easily provoked a reaction from the AVFC staff – it was only luck that it did not strike someone.

19. The Commission noted that had a spectator thrown a bottle at or into a technical area it would be considered as being a serious act of violence, not to be tolerated at a football match. It is a very poor example when a person involved at the highest level of professional football in England acts in such a disrespectful, irresponsible and dangerous way against his professional counterparts.

20. The Commission noted the '*entry point*' stipulated in the FA's sanction guidance, it gave credit for CFC's admittance of the charge, took into consideration the Club's previous disciplinary record and factored in the highly aggravating seriousness of the act itself.

21. Having considered all the circumstances the Commission decided that a fine of £150,000 was a fair and proportionate sanction.

22. The decision of the Commission is subject to Appeal in accordance with the FA's Rules and Regulations.

Stuart Ripley

Regulatory Commission Chairman

21st January 2025