

IN THE MATTER OF THE MISCONDUCT HEARING

OF THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

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-v-

RYAN HAMILTON

WRITTEN RULING OF THE REGULATORY COMMISSION

1. Mr Hamilton faces Misconduct Proceedings in respect of 24 breaches of FA Rule E3.1 arising from his conduct when performing the role of First Team Manager of Sutton Coldfield Town Women FC (“SCTWFC”) between May 2022 and November 2024.
2. Mr Hamilton denies the allegations and elected for the matter to be dealt with on the papers. The Regulatory Commission (RC) met on 15 December 2025 to determine the facts, and thereafter, if necessary, any sanction.
3. The Regulatory Commission consisted of;

Jane Bickerstaff KC (Chairperson) – Independent Specialist Panel Member

Martin Hill – Independent Panel Member

Alison O’Dowd – Independent Panel Member

Conrad Gibbons – Judicial Services Assistant Manager - Secretary

4. The RC were provided with a substantial bundle of witness statements, witness interviews, video footage, and the response from Mr Hamilton given in interview.
5. The RC reviewed the evidence supplied and applied the balance of probabilities as the evidential standard. There were 5 separate complainants; 4 players and a [REDACTED] for the team. There were clear themes and threads of evidence running through all 5 accounts.
6. The 4 players particularly were known to each other and the RC were mindful that when Player C reported to Birmingham County FA on 15 October 2024, it is clear from the wording of her statement that the players had spoken and were aware that they had each been treated in a similar way by Mr Hamilton. However, there was no sense or feeling of collusion, and the repeated themes in the witness statements only served to reinforce the likelihood of truth.
7. Overall, the RC found all the complainants’ accounts credible and compelling and there was no reason for fabrication either apparent, or suggested by Mr Hamilton.
8. The RC noted that Mr Hamilton attended for interview as requested by the FA. He answered general questions about his employment and management style. He

answered specific questions about the allegations made by Player C and Player A. However, after a break in the lengthy interview, and before specific questions could be asked about the other 3 witness accounts, Mr Hamilton took a phone call and terminated the interview. He thereafter failed to engage with the FA to arrange a further interview. He did not provide material from his telephone as requested, despite stating that there was material there which would shed light on some of the allegations. The RC therefore had no more than bare denials from Mr Hamilton in relation to Player B, Player D and Club [REDACTED].

9. The RC noted that all statements and witness interviews contained accounts of a verbally aggressive and bullying management style adopted by Mr Hamilton. He was said to often be abusive to individuals, belittling and humiliating them to the point that they no longer wished to attend training or play for the club. Many commented that their mental health was negatively affected. There were no particular charges in relation to this conduct and so the RC noted it as background but did not specifically take it into account when assessing the evidence on any particular charge. The RC noted that in his interview Mr Hamilton denied any personally abusive or bullying behaviour. He stated that he would sometimes shout and swear generally and part of his management style was sometimes to make himself “public enemy number one”.
10. The RC reviewed the evidence on each charge, taking into account any supporting evidence where available, and again where available, any response given in interview.

11. Rule FA E3.1 states:

A Participant shall at all times act in the best interests of the game and shall not act in any manner which is improper or brings the game into disrepute or use any one, or a combination of, violent conduct, serious foul play, threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting words or behaviour.

12. Taking each complainant in turn, and in chronological order of the alleged date of behaviour;

Club [REDACTED]

In respect of Club [REDACTED] (“[REDACTED]”), a SCTWFC [REDACTED], it is alleged that from or around August 2023,

Charge 14

On numerous occasions between August 2023 and November 2023 you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you sent messages to [REDACTED] on Snapchat using words to the effect of: “*you must be good company at night*” [followed by a wink emoji] and/or, “*yeah like always like the little flirts and ‘fun’ we have xx*”, and/ or “*flirting makes the world go round xx*”.

Charge 15

On numerous occasions, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you sent photographs to [REDACTED] via Snapchat of your penis.

Charge 16

On a date unknown towards the end of the 23/24 season, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you repeatedly asked [REDACTED] to go home with you whilst she was working at the club bar.

Findings

The RC found her account to be credible. She supplied supporting evidence from her phone of one of the messages referenced in charge 14. This witness was a colleague at an equivalent level within SCTWFC, and therefore the dynamic was different to that of the players in terms of the power differential. It was clear that this did not preclude him from behaving in the same way.

The RC found charges 14 and 15 proved on the balance of probabilities.

The RC found charge 16 not proved. Although the RC had no doubt that this witness was truthful, and Mr Hamilton did repeatedly ask her to go home with him, she made it clear that she robustly declined his offer and told him what she thought of the propriety of his behaviour. At the time she was no longer working as a [REDACTED] with him but was working part-time [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The RC considered carefully whether his conduct amounted to behaving in an improper manner within the Regulatory framework. On balance the RC decided that it didn't.

Player A

In respect of Player A (“[REDACTED]”), a SCTWFC Player, it is alleged that from or around September 2023,

Charge 17

At the end of the season 2023/24 presentation evening you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent and/or threatening behaviour towards [REDACTED] whereby you kissed her within her motor vehicle.

Charge 18

On numerous occasions during meetings with [REDACTED] regarding football matters, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive words whereby you used words to the effect of you would “*turn her straight*” if you slept with her.

Charge 19

Between March 2023 and the end of August 2023, on numerous occasions you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you sent messages to [REDACTED] via WhatsApp and/or Snapchat using words to the effect of, “*you're fit*”, and/or that you wanted to “*fuck her*”, and/or “*you wouldn't be gay if you spent the night with me*”, and/or “*you wouldn't be gay if I had my way with you*”.

Charge 20

On numerous occasions, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent behaviour whereby you sent photographs of yourself topless to [REDACTED].

Charge 21

On 11 June 2024 you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you sent message to [REDACTED] on WhatsApp using the words “*can receive back shots from me anytime x*”.

Charge 22

On or around the 25 August 2024 you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you sent [REDACTED] a message on Snapchat using words to the effect of, “*score the winner against [REDACTED] and I’m railing you in the office*”.

Charge 23

On the morning after the season 2023/24 presentation evening, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent behaviour whereby you sent an indecent photograph of yourself to [REDACTED] via WhatsApp and/or Snapchat.

Charge 24

On an unknown date, during a coaching session you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you used words towards [REDACTED] relating to having a “*threesome*” with her and another SCTWFC player, (name supplied but redacted).

Findings

Again, the RC found this account credible. There was a supporting statement from [REDACTED] who had seen one of the messages on [REDACTED] phone. There was some support from Player C, who had received a recent complaint from [REDACTED]. The SCTWFC [REDACTED] provided a statement confirming that he witnessed Mr Hamilton within [REDACTED] car as he was leaving the presentation evening. He did not notice anything untoward at that time, but was subsequently advised by [REDACTED] in November 2024 that something had happened in the car after he had left.

The RC found charges 17 to 24 proved.

Player B

In respect of Player B (■■■■), a SCTWFC Player, it is alleged that from or around February 2024,

Charge 4

On two occasions prior to training during season 2024/25, you acted in an improper manner and/or used indecent behaviour whereby you invited ■■■■ into the changing rooms, asked her to sit beside you and then put your arm around her waist whilst you were alone together.

Charge 5

On numerous occasions, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent behaviour whereby you sent photographs of yourself partially naked and/or photographs of your penis to ■■■■ via Snapchat.

Charge 6

On numerous occasions, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent behaviour whereby you sent videos of yourself masturbating to ■■■■ via Snapchat.

Charge 7

On numerous occasions, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you sent a message to ■■■■ via Snapchat requesting she send you photographs of herself.

Charge 8

On a date unknown prior to a home fixture, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you asked ■■■ if you could watch while she was changing her shorts whilst you were alone together.

Charge 9

On a date unknown, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you sent a message to ■■■ via Snapchat stating that you wanted to “*fuck her in the changing rooms*”.

Findings

The RC found this account also to be credible and compelling. It was with a degree of sadness that the RC noted how this witness had blamed herself. She also articulated well the effects of Mr Hamilton’s management style when she said,

“I feel I am partly to blame for his actions as I never told him no or how it made me feel. I felt like I was completely out of control in these situations and was scared the consequences it would have for me at football. I felt like it was easier to just entertain the situation as such, because I was worried about what would happen if I didn’t. I felt uncomfortable, it got to the point that I was ready to quit football and give up...”

Mr Hamilton stated in interview that he and Player B had “a flirty friendship”. This seemed to be the equivalent of claiming that offensive/inappropriate remarks were “just banter” without any appreciation of the effect such remarks have on the person on the receiving end.

The RC felt that this set of complaints represented an escalation in conduct after Mr Hamilton had concluded that he seemed to be getting away with this type of behaviour.

The RC found charges 4 to 9 inclusive proved.

Player C

In respect of Player C (“█”), a SCTWFC Player, it is alleged that from or around June 2024,

Charge 1

On an occasion when having coffee with █, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you discussed SCTWFC players wearing jogging bottoms to training stating “*You can only wear joggers if you have a nice bum*” and/or said that █ could wear jogging bottoms to training because she had “*a nice bum*”.

Charge 2

On numerous occasions, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent behaviour whereby you sent photographs of yourself partially naked to █ via Snapchat and/or WhatsApp.

Charge 3

On numerous occasions, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you sent messages to █ via Snapchat stating words to the effect of, “*let me sleep with you*”, and/ or “*our sex would be good*”, and/or “*let me rail you*”.

Findings

This player instigated the official complaint and again the RC found her account credible and compelling. When answering questions in interview about this player's allegations, Mr Hamilton came very close to admitting the conduct.

When the specifics of charge 1 were put to him, he said there was "some truth in that". He later said that, although he recognised it was inappropriate, he had said something about her clothing. It was clear that he thought he had a very close friendship with Player C and he could not bring himself to deny her allegations and thus paint her as a liar. At no point though did he acknowledge the appalling nature of his conduct.

The RC had no hesitation in finding charges 1 to 3 proved.

Player D

In respect of Player D ("█"), a SCTWFC Player, it is alleged that from or around June 2024,

Charge 10

On a date unknown, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you invited █ into the changing rooms during a warm-up whereupon the lights went out and you used the words "*I'm going to stay over here in case I put it on you*" whilst you were alone together.

Charge 11

On numerous occasions, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent word and/or behaviour whereby you used words

to the effect of “*railing*” ■■■ and/or “*putting it on*” ■■■ in the changing room and/or “*we could go and fuck in the changing room*” and/or made reference to having sex and going to training where nobody would know.

Charge 12

On numerous occasions, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you sent photographs of yourself partially naked to ■■■ via Snapchat and/or used words to the effect of “*come to bed*” and/or “*I’m in bed*” and/or “*imagine if you sucked me off before training and we turn up like nothing happened*” and/or “*waiting for you*”.

Charge 13

On a date unknown, you acted in an improper manner and/or used insulting and/or abusive and/or indecent words and/or behaviour whereby you stated to ■■■ “*you can wear your nose ring because you look fit, you look better with it in*”.

Findings

This player only joined the club in the Summer of the 24/25 season and stated that she had never been fearful of a manager until Mr Hamilton. This was disappointing as she had met Mr Hamilton before and cited him as a major reason for moving to the club. However, his behaviour towards her was constantly overtly sexual. Like the other witnesses she was credible and compelling. ■■■ reports that she would often respond to his messages in a way to deflect or avoid confrontation, such as using laughing emojis or vague compliments like “*Oh, looking good.*” ■■■ felt compelled to respond to avoid negative consequences at training, as ignoring or rejecting Mr Hamilton's

messages could lead to being benched or being subject to Mr Hamilton's harsh treatment. She reports feeling "*shameful*" because she wanted to say, "*that's inappropriate*" but she said "*people were scared to ignore it or to say, 'Fuck off,' because you were scared of what would happen at training*".

This player's account was supported by the evidence of ■■■. ■■■ did not directly witness any of the messages sent by Mr Hamilton but ■■■ confided in her about the nature of the messages she received and how it made her feel uncomfortable and how she feared repercussions.

The RC found charges 10 to 13 inclusive proved.

Sanction

13. Having found 23 charges proved, the RC moved to consider sanction. The case was adjourned for a few days to allow both parties to make submissions. The RC sat again on the afternoon of 19 December.

14. The RC considered the representations made, and also the recent decision in the case of *The FA v Daniel Senda* [11 December 2023]. Cases of this type are mercifully rare and of course each must be considered upon its own facts.

15. The RC was unanimous that the only appropriate sanction in a case of this nature and seriousness was an immediate suspension from all or any football related activity. The RC's discussions were focussed around the length of such a suspension.

16. The FA submitted that there should be an element of deterrence in the sanction imposed. The RC wholeheartedly agrees. Women should be able to participate in football without being subjected to the sort of behaviour Mr Hamilton exhibited towards them. Women should be able to participate in football free from the fear of any such improper, indecent, abusive and insulting behaviour or words being used towards them.

17. Women's football is prospering, and for it to continue to flourish, a clear message needs to be sent that the sort of Misconduct Mr Hamilton committed will not be tolerated and will be met with the most severe consequences.

18. The RC noted the gravity of Mr Hamilton's misconduct. A number of women were affected, 5 directly and many others indirectly. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] It went on for over 18 months and no doubt would have continued had Player C not complained.

19. Mr Hamilton was in a position of trust and had power and responsibility over the players. He misused that position in a misogynistic and sexually inappropriate way. The effect of his relentless conduct on the women concerned was evident from their statements and some of it has been quoted earlier in this ruling. They were embarrassed. They felt so intimidated and uncomfortable that they often didn't know how to respond. They feared the consequences of complaining and that it would impact on their chances of being selected to play the sport they love. And worst of all, some of them somehow felt that it might be their fault.

20. Against all of this, Mr Hamilton denied all the charges and required them to be proved, although in electing a paper hearing at least he saved his victims having to give evidence. He has shown no introspection, contrition or remorse. He seems to have absolutely no insight into the effect of his conduct. The closest he has come is to say that he is “not proud of” his behaviour.

21. In a document he submitted for the RC’s consideration he put forward no real mitigation and indeed the RC noted that it read more like an admission of the charges. He submitted no character references however did provide two emails from persons concerning his coaching.

22. The RC decided that a lengthy suspension from all football was appropriate in this case.

23. Regulation 56 of the FA Handbook 2025/2026 states; “Unless the Regulatory Commission determines otherwise, a penalty or order shall come into effect immediately at the date of the notification of the decision.”

24. The sanction is therefore a suspension from all football and football related activity for a period of 12 years from the date of notification of the sanction.

25. No financial penalty is appropriate

26. No order is made as to costs

