

IN THE MATTER OF A FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY COMMISSION

BETWEEN:

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

and

MR VITOR PEREIRA;
WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS FOOTBALL CLUB.

WRITTEN REASONS AND DECISION OF
THE INDEPENDENT REGULATORY COMMISSION FOLLOWING THE
HEARING
ON 20 OCTOBER 2025

Background

1. These are the written reasons for a decision made by an Independent Regulatory Commission which sat by video conference on 20 October 2025.
2. The Regulatory Commission members were Mr Gareth Farrelly, Chairman and Independent Football Panel Member, Mr Tony Agana, Independent Football Panel Member and Mr Terry Burton, Independent Football Panel Member.
3. Mr Michael O'Connor, Judicial Services Assistant Manager acted as Secretary to the Regulatory Commission.

Charges, Evidence and Replies

4. By letter dated 8 October 2025, The Football Association ("The FA") charged Mr Vitor Pereira of Wolverhampton Wanderers FC with misconduct in respect of a breach of FA Rule E3.1 in respect of the Premier League fixture between Wolverhampton Wanderers FC and Brighton & Hove Albion FC on 5 October 2025.
5. The Football Association designated this as a Non-Standard Case as the particular facts of the alleged misconduct were of a serious and/or unusual nature.
6. Rule E3.1 states that –

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.

7. It was alleged that in/or around the 19th minute of the above fixture, he acted in an improper manner, leading to his dismissal.
8. The FA included the following evidence with the respective charge: -
 - Dismissal report from the Match Official, Mr. J. Gillett., dated 5 October 2025;
 - Email correspondence between Mr. J. Gillett, The Football Association and Mr. P. Tierney, dated 6-7 October 2025;
 - Email correspondence between Mr. J. Gillett, The Football Association and Mr. T. Murtagh, Sky Sports Floor Manager, dated 7 October 2025;
 - Email correspondence between Mr. J. Gillett, The Football Association and Mr. R. Bush, Premier League Match Manager, dated 7 October 2025; and
 - Three video clips of the incident.
9. With regard to the incident the Match Referee, in his Official Report Form, stated: -

*"I have to report that I, as the **Referee** sent off **Vitor Pereira** of Wolverhampton Wanderers FC*

***Under Law 12 section:** Physical or aggressive behaviour (including biting and spitting)*

In the 20th minute of the match, I didn't award a free kick to Wolves in the middle of the

pitch and play continued. Whilst play continued, approximately 15 seconds later, Paul Tierney, the 4th Official, informed me that the manager of Wolves (Vitor Pereira) had to be shown the red card at the next stoppage in play. As play continued from this nonfoul decision, Pereira left the technical area and kicked a ball towards the direction of the sky sports / match manager's dugout. The match manager had to take evasive action, and the ball struck the Sky Sports floor manager. I stopped play in the 21st minute of the match to award a free kick to Wolves near the touchline closest to the Brighton technical area, and showed the yellow card to number 17 of Brighton (Baleba) for this challenge. At this stoppage I then showed the red card to Pereira who left the technical area without any further incident”.

10. The Fourth Official was asked for his observations and stated: -

“The incident happened from the time 18:26. Wolverhampton Wanderer’s technical staff felt that they should have had a free kick when there was a turnover of possession and were angry when this did not happen. There was a spare match ball located on a cone between the two technical areas and the Wolverhampton Wanderer’s manager left his technical area and forcefully kicked this ball which ended up going in to the ‘official’s dugout’ and striking one of the television floor managers. The Wolverhampton Wanderer’s manager immediately realised what had happened and went to where the floor managers were seated and apologised. I then said to the referee that the next time the ball goes out of play I need you to come over and send the Wolverhampton Wanderer’s manager off. The next stoppage was when Brighton no.17 was cautioned and following this, the referee showed the Wolverhampton Wanderer’s manager the red card”.

11. The Sky Sports Floor Manager, also provided his observations, stating: -

“In around the 20th minute of the game this past Sunday, there was an incident on the pitch that Mr Pereira seemed unhappy with. Mr Pereira was obviously upset with the incident and was discussing it with the fourth official. In what seemed like an act of pure frustration, rather than any anger or malice, he kicked out at one of the spare balls that sit pitch side. The ball happens to sit a few yards from where I was sitting, alongside the Premier League Match Manager, Rupert Bush. It came towards us, but I was able to put my hand up to deflect it. Mr Pereira had his back to us initially, the ball was positioned to his left, so when he turned to kick it, he more likely would not have seen anyone sitting behind him. Realising, immediately, what had happened, Mr Pereira came straight over to apologise not just once, but twice! He then apologised again after receiving a red card for his actions. Having worked with Mr Pereira on many occasions, I’ve come to know him as someone who is very level headed, respectful and mild mannered. I can say with certainty that I know this incident was completely out of character and that there was no malice or intent”.

12. Mr Pereira admitted the charge by reply on 13 October 2025. He did not request a personal hearing, and the case was dealt with on the papers only. He submitted a witness statement alongside a detailed statement from the club and the Matchday Floor Manager, Mr Tom Warren, the contents of which were read and noted by the Commission.

13. The following is a summary of the principal submissions provided to the Commission. It does not purport to contain reference to all the points made, however the absence of a point, or submission, in these reasons 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 written and video evidence in respect of this case.
14. In summary, it was Mr Pereira's position that his actions were not in response to any decisions of the Referee but the actions of one of his players who had lost the ball and exposed the team to a set of counter attacks. It was submitted that this frustration was further exacerbated as he had expressly instructed him not to play in this manner before this incident. It was in this frustration that he kicked out at the spare ball that was close to him. He did not intend to kick the ball in any particular direction, other than obviously the field of play. There was no malicious intent, but it was reckless as to the consequences of his actions. It was submitted that it was a temporary lack of emotional control.
15. The club submissions relied on a number of previous cases with similar facts, as well as the pressures Mr Pereira was under given the club's precarious league position and the job insecurity associated with this. The FA sought to rebut this as well as distinguish the case authorities based on their timing and also claiming that since the introduction of Participant Behaviour Charter, they offered little assistance. As to sanction, The FA invited the Commission to impose both a sporting and financial penalty to mark the misconduct. It was submitted that Mr Pereira's actions fell below the expected standards, in particular given his role as a manager of a professional team.
16. Given that the charge was admitted, the task of the Commission was to determine the appropriate sanction. The Commission were mindful that any sanction should be fair and proportionate based on the material facts of the case. There is no exact formula for doing so. Each case will always turn on its own particular facts. The Commission found the case authorities to assist them in their deliberations. The FA position that these cases were in some not *good law* due to the introduction of the Participant Behaviour Charter were not persuasive. In fact, one of the decisions relied upon was post the introduction of the Charter.
17. Having considered all of the aggravating and mitigating factors, it was agreed that a financial sanction was appropriate. For completeness, this was a majority decision. It was one of the Commission member's opinion that a sporting sanction should also have applied. With regard to the majority position, it was their position that Mr Pereira had accepted the charge at the earliest opportunity. He had immediately apologised after the incident, was contrite and reflective of his conduct. He had no previous similar breaches on his record. His apology had been accepted by those involved in the incident. It is right that managers in such positions of authority and influence are held to a higher standard, however in this case, for those reasons, the majority decision of the Commission was that a sporting sanction was not warranted.
18. If this had been a Standard Case, the sanction would have been a fine of £8,000.00. It is accepted that the particular facts are of a serious and/or unusual nature but not such that a sporting sanction was warranted. Whilst not determinative, it was noted in The FA submissions that there was no evidence to suggest that the incident itself was captured or broadcast either through mainstream media outlets or across social media. Broadcast footage only captured the sending off itself by the Match Referee. Moreover, it was

evident that a ball is positioned close to the dugout area at all times of the game. Mr Pereira's reaction, be it instinctive was to kick the ball which was in the closest vicinity to him. In the other cases cited, that may have been a water bottle or a substitute board.

19. The Commission were provided with Mr Pereira's football remuneration. This was not a standard case. The fine for a Standard Case provided some guidance however the Commission has a discretion with regard to any financial sanction. As with any Non-Standard case there is no exact formula in relation to determining that financial sanction, save that it be fair and proportionate. In applying the same rationale set out above, taking into account the aggravating and mitigating factors, the Commission consider a fine of £15,000.00 to be appropriate in this case.

Conclusion

20. The Commission, having carefully considered all of the written and evidence imposed the following sanction on Mr Pereira:

- (i) He is fined the sum of £15,000.00

21. This decision is subject to the relevant Appeal Regulations

Mr Gareth Farrelly, Chairman and Independent Football Panel Member
Mr Tony Agana, Independent Football Panel Member
Mr Terry Burton, Independent Football Panel Member
22 October 2025