

**IN THE MATTER OF
BASKETBALL ENGLAND**

-v-

**CHRISTIAN HILL
(CASE NUMBER D40)**

**REASONS FOR DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION DECISION
FRIDAY 18th NOVEMBER 2022**

INTRODUCTION

1. These are written reasons for the findings of a Disciplinary Commission ('the Commission'), held on behalf of Basketball England (BE) on Friday 18th November 2022. The Commission met by videoconference (Teams) to consider a misconduct charge against Christian Hill (CH) a registered coach with Bristol Flyers. The offence is alleged to have taken place immediately before an U18s game ('the game/match') between Bristol Flyers and London Elite on 8th October 2022.

PARTIES

2. The Commission members were Anthony Rock (Chair), Kate Lewis and Tom Cleeve (all members of BE's Disciplinary Panel).
3. Rachel Scase, BE's Discipline Manager, acted as Secretary to the Commission.

MISCONDUCT CHARGE LETTER

4. By BE's Misconduct Charge Letter, dated 7th November 2022, the following charge was raised:

Charge (CH) - Disciplinary Code 5.2 - Inappropriate behaviour, falling below the standard expected, including violent conduct towards a Match Official.

BE DISCIPLINARY CODE

5. The relevant section of BE's Disciplinary Code (5.2) states:

Participants are required to ensure their behaviour is appropriate at all times, and maybe subject to a charge under these rules and regulations where such behaviour falls below the standard expected irrespective as to whether that misconduct was committed during a game or at any other time.

CHARGE

6. The charge against CH was raised when, immediately prior to the match, in an altercation with the Referee he grabbed and/or pushed him in or around the doorway of the Wise Arena changing rooms.

PLEA

7. On 9th November 2022, CH pleaded guilty to the charge and requested that the matter be dealt with on correspondence only.

Comment: Given the serious nature of the charge and potential sanction, the Commission expressed some surprise that CM did not submit any additional evidence, from either himself or witnesses. It may well be, given the imposition of new regulations/processes for this season, that he didn't fully understand the seriousness of the charge nor what possible sanctions he faced having pleaded guilty.

WRITTEN EVIDENCE

8. The written evidence available to the Commission consisted of:
- a. Witness statement dated 10th October 2022, submitted by the Match Referee, Andrew Broughton.
 - b. Witness statement dated 11th October 2022, submitted by the Match Referee, Brendan Redko.
 - c. E-mail exchanges dated 11th and 25th October 2022, between Rachel Scase (BE's Discipline Manager) and the replacement Match Referee, Danny James.
 - d. E-mail exchanges dated 13th, 25th, 26th and 27th October 2022 and 1st and 4th November 2022, between Rachel Scase and Club Officials from Bristol Flyers (Mark Woodward, Chris Bourne and Emma Searle).
 - e. Witness statement dated 6th November 2022, submitted by the Match Table Official, Becks Palou.
 - f. Undated statement submitted by the accused, CH.
 - g. BE's Misconduct Charge Letter (CH), dated 7th November 2022.
 - h. E-mail exchange dated 9th November 2022, between Rachel Scase and Mark Woodward.
 - i. BE's Response to Charge form dated 9th November 2022, submitted by CH.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE/FINDINGS

9. The foregoing is a brief summary of the case. As CH pleaded guilty to the charge, the issue for the Commission was not to deliberate on matters of fact/probability but to determine the sanction to be imposed. The Commission accepted his guilty plea.

10. On Saturday 8th October 2022, CH was involved in a Bristol Flyers U16 fixture at the Wise Arena which ran over time. As he was debriefing the U16s team in the dressing room, Andrew

Broughton, one of the Match Referees for the next game (Bristol Flyers U18 v London Elite U18), opened the dressing room door and informed CH that he should be on court to start the next game (CH was standing in as the coach for the Bristol Flyers U18 team). Statements submitted by CH and Andrew Broughton differ in their version of what happened, but it is not disputed that CH then made physical contact with Andrew Broughton and physically removed him from the dressing room. The only other witness to submit evidence was the Table Official, Becks Palou, and she stated that she thought CH had put his hands on Andrew Broughton's shoulders and showed him out.

BE SANCTION GUIDELINES/CATEGORISATION OF THE OFFENCE/DISCIPLINARY RECORD

11. The Commission considered the BE Sanction Guidelines and categorisation of the offence before then hearing CH's disciplinary record.

- a. Sanction Guidelines for the 2022/2023 Season in regard to the sanction for violent conduct towards a Match Official: a suspension of between 6 months and 5 years, and a fine of between £100-500. The Commission noted that under the BE Disciplinary Code (Appendix 1, paragraph 7), they are able to impose, where there are compelling mitigating factors, a mandatory minimum suspension of 3 months. Before hearing CH's previous disciplinary record, the Commission placed the offence in the Low Category of the Guidelines.
- b. The Commission noted that CH has no previous proven charges of misconduct.

SANCTION

12. Taking into account the BE Guidelines and Regulations, nature of the offence, misconduct record, mitigating and aggravating factors (particularly the age of the young people in the dressing room) and plea submitted, the Commission concluded that the following sanction is to be imposed:

CH: to be suspended for 3 months (minimum sanction that the Commission is able to impose) and to be fined £100.

Note: the Commission considered in some detail how the suspension is to be served. For the avoidance of doubt, CH can continue in his day to day coaching role with Bristol Flyers. However, on game days, whilst able to support the team as a spectator from within the allocated area for spectators, he is banned from the changing room and is to have no involvement with any basketball activities before, during or after the game. This includes in the hour leading up to tip off and until 20 minutes after the official end of the game. CH is also suspended from playing in any league and cup fixtures for the duration of the suspension. He can attend training sessions during this period.

13. In accordance with BE Regulations there is a right of appeal against the decision.

Anthony Rock (Chair)

Monday 21st November 2022

Tom Cleeve

Kate Lewis