

BETWEEN:

SHROPSHIRE COUNTY CRICKET LEAGUE

And

ZAHEER KHAN

And

NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

DISCIPLINARY PANEL HEARING DECISION and JUDGMENT

PURSUANT TO GENERAL CONDUCT REGULATIONS ('GCR') 2026 Reg 35 & 36

Outline and relevant background to hearing

1. Zaheer Khan was playing for Newport CC's 2nd XI against Condoover 1st XI in a SCCL Division 3 fixture on 1 August 2026.
2. During the course of the match, his dismissal whilst batting sparked a verbal and physical altercation during which it is alleged that Mr Khan assaulted a Condoover player, followed in short order by his own team/club's umpire.
3. On receipt of the umpire's Disciplinary Report form and a witness statement from the Condoover captain, the SCCL's Disciplinary Officer ('DO') sent a Charge Letter to Mr Khan alleging 2 separate GCR reg 5 Level 4 charges involving both Newport's own umpire, Bruce Summers, and Tom Atkins a player from Condoover CC. The Charge Letter was dated 5 August and set out the relevant parts of the GCR, the alleged facts and the evidence relied upon in settling the charges against him. The Charge Letter explained that given the severity and seriousness of the charges, the summary adjudication process within regs 21-28 inclusive would not apply, and that a Disciplinary Panel would be convened to hold a hearing.
4. An undated response was sent to the SCCL's DO by Mr Khan. He did not specifically admit or deny the two charges against him. We will return to the content of this response later in relation to our determination of the sanctions in this matter.
5. There was no objection to the proposed composition of the Disciplinary Panel, and a date was set for the hearing being Monday 24 August 2026 at Lilleshall Cricket Club. Mr Khan and Kyle Hodson (Newport Chair and 2nd XI captain) were invited to attend and to submit any relevant evidence or submissions before that date.

The charges

6. The Charge Letter set out the relevant parts of the ECB's GCR namely reg 5 Level 4:

(b) **making inappropriate and deliberate and/or dangerous physical contact with an umpire;**

and

(c) **physically assaulting a cricketer or any other person;**

The alleged facts were stated as being:

During the SCCL Division Three match between Newport 2nd XI and Condover 1st XI on Saturday 1st August 2026 you were visibly angry at the decision to give you out, swore and threw your bat in the direction of the Condover wicket-keeper; you actively engaged in physical contact with several Condover players, including pushing Tom Atkins in the chest; you hit the match official, Bruce Summers, in the chest and upper body and aimed further attempted punches at him which missed. It was several minutes before you left the field of play. This is a breach of regulation 5 Level 4 (b) & (c) as detailed above.

7. The evidence referred to in the Charge Letter, and which was also before us as the Disciplinary Panel consisted of:
 - a. Umpire report from Bruce Summers, Newport CC.
 - b. Statement from Niall Salisbury, Condover CC.
 - c. Statement from Kyle Hodson, Newport CC.
 - d. Statement from Zaheer Khan.
8. Despite being given the opportunity to admit or deny the charges (and with the potential of receiving credit for an early admission of responsibility) Mr Khan declined to do so.

The hearing

9. The hearing took place as planned on Monday 24 August. In addition to the Disciplinary Panel members, the hearing was attended by Liam O'Neill the SCCL's DO (and the author of the Charge Letters) and Kyle Hodson on behalf of Newport CC. Zaheer Khan did not attend, nor was he represented, nor did he make any written submissions to the Panel.
10. The evidence before the Panel was therefore uncontested, although Kyle Hodson did not believe that the throw of the bat was necessarily deliberate but accepted that it was not only reckless, but became the immediate catalyst for the assaults which followed. The accounts of the assaults provided by Niall Salisbury and one of the victims, Bruce Summers, was not gainsaid by Kyle Hodson.
11. Kyle Hodson offered his personal perspective on the incident, its aftermath and the steps taken by Newport CC as a whole in response to it, including the disciplinary process that has followed.

Findings

12. As a Panel we are required by the GCR reg 35 to determine the charges and whether they are proven based on the 'balance of probabilities. This is the burden of proof applied in these cases. We do not need to be *sure* or *certain* but have to be persuaded that what is alleged to have happened took place *more likely than not*. In mathematical terms, a 50.01% probability.
13. The accounts provided by the 3 material witnesses had large degrees of consistency between them, and in any event, they were not subject to challenge by Mr Khan. We have no doubt at all the statements were made in clear good faith and accurately reflected what took place; where there were discrepancies these were minor, and not material. The essential parts of the charges were made out within this evidence, and we have no hesitation that Zaheer Khan was in breach of both Level 4 charges based on the balance of probabilities. Mr Khan pushed Tom Atkins forcibly in the chest before doing likewise to Bruce Summers and then attempted to punch Mr Summers on more than one occasion. It was a violent, unprovoked attack without any justification. These findings were made on an unanimous basis by the Panel.

Sanctions

14. Having found Mr Khan to be in breach of the 2 Level 4 charges, we were then required by reg 36 to consider the appropriate sanctions to be applied to him. Further, the SCCL's own rules contained in its 2026 Rules and Playing Directives Handbook require us to consider the appropriate sanction to be applied to Newport Cricket Club's 2nd XI.
15. In determining Mr Khan's sanction, we were guided by GCR 2026 Appendix 3 which states:
 1. *The table below sets out recommended sanctions to be applied on Respondents in respect of On-Field Breaches. However, the Adjudicator or Disciplinary Panel will not be limited to imposing the recommended sanctions and can impose greater or lesser sanctions as appropriate in the circumstances of the particular case.*
 2. *Unless the Adjudicator or Disciplinary Panel stipulate otherwise, bans will apply to all cricket, be effective immediately and, for the purpose of totting up the number of breaches within a specified period, will remain on the Respondent's record for 24 calendar months from the date of the breach.*

Level of On-field breach	First On-Field breach	Second On-Field Breach (within 24 months)	Third On-Field Breach (within 24 months)
Level 1	1 match ban	2 match ban	3 match ban
Level 2	2 match ban	4 match ban	12 match ban
Level 3	6 match ban	12 match ban	24 match ban
Level 4	10 match ban	20 match ban	40 match ban

16. Appendix 3 also requires the Disciplinary Panel to take into account all aggravating and mitigating factors when determining the appropriate sanction. We then determine whether,

and to what extent, to depart from the standard sanctions and/or to impose additional or lesser penalties as we deem fit.

17. We are also required to give consideration to any aggravating and mitigating factors, as appropriate. In our judgement, the following factors are relevant in this particular case:

Aggravating factors

(a) The ages of the Respondent and any victim at the time of the offence. In this instance the umpire was a man in his late 70s and Zaheer Khan was a much younger man, believed to be in his 40s. There was a considerable age disparity and in the case of one of the victims, an inherent vulnerability occasioned by his age.

(b) Failure to cooperate with the Disciplinary Officer and/or Relevant Disciplinary Body. In this case the Respondent failed to admit or deny the breach and failed to present evidence or attend the Disciplinary Panel hearing. Further, given the content of the Respondent's letter in response to the charges, it is hard to reach any other conclusion that he has held the disciplinary process with anything other than casual disdain and contempt.

(c) The level of harm and/or distress incurred. This was an unprovoked and unjustifiable violent attack on both a player and an official. Understandably, Bruce Summers, in particular, was shocked and shaken by the experience.

(d) Lack of remorse. Not only was there a lack of an apology, either on the day of the match, or in its aftermath but the Respondent compounded the breaches by the content of his own written witness statement. Within that frankly remarkable document, he accused Bruce Summers himself of instigating the physical confrontation by pushing the Respondent. Further, he went on to say: *"I have already decided I will not play again on Saturday for this club and let people like Bruce ruin my day like he does every week of number of other players who wants to come and have fun."*

I have to be honest and tell you he is so bad at what he does every Saturday he can't hear the edges and can't see far enough to judge LBW.

I believe he should stay at home and stop ruining people Saturday because he hasn't got a clue what he's doing"

This degree of victim-blaming aggravates the offence.

(e) Failure to admit responsibility. Whilst not actively denying the charges, he has failed to accept any responsibility for his actions either within or outside of the disciplinary process.

Mitigating factors

(a) Good previous disciplinary record. The only positive thing that can be said in relation to Zaheer Khan is that he does not have any relevant disciplinary matters within the last 24 months (which is the relevant period for GCR breaches)

18. If there were mitigating factors that we could rely upon, or there were no aggravating factors, we could have conceivably considered imposing a concurrent playing ban for the 2 breaches. Instead, we believe that the right sanction is for the playing ban for the 2 breaches to run consecutively. The suggested entry point guidance of a 10-match ban for an admitted/proven Level 4 offence is in our view correct for these circumstances. We see no reason to depart from that. The playing ban will therefore cover 20 Saturday/Sunday matches in either the SCCL or any other ECB regulated league that the Respondent wishes to play in. The playing ban will also encompass any ECB regulated cricket played within the 20-match period. The ban will be effective from **24 August 2026.**

19. In relation to Newport CC's sanction, the SCCL's own rules will also apply. Rule 26.6 of the SHROPSHIRE COUNTY CRICKET LEAGUE RULEBOOK, PLAYING DIRECTIVES & PLAYING CONDITIONS 2026 states that:

In addition to the recommended sanctions, the SCCL shall impose the additional MINIMUM points sanctions:

- Level 1 Offence - 10 Points deducted from team of player, official or spectator sanctioned
- Level 2 Offence - 20 Points Deducted
- Level 3 Offence - 30 Points Deducted
- Level 4 Offence - 40 Points Deducted

20. Unlike Mr Khan, Newport CC's conduct from the moment of the incident to date has been impeccable and exemplary. Their players took immediate action to restrain Mr Khan and to prevent further (possibly even more serious) assaults taking place against players and the official. Mr Khan was asked to leave the ground and was told the same day that he was expelled as a member of the club and would never play for Newport CC again. The 2nd XI captain prepared an immediate statement detailing the events, took practical steps to support the club umpire, Bruce Summers, after the incident and received credit and acknowledgment from Condover CC for the club's reaction. Kyle Hodson as Chair of Newport CC has been fully engaged and co-operative with the disciplinary process and attended the hearing. He told the Panel of the practical steps the club have taken/will be taking to prevent any kind of repetition and was open and receptive to the idea of working with Cricket Shropshire to undertake guided education and training for the members/players. He offered full and unreserved apologies and talked at length about the culture that he wants to create at Newport CC.
21. Kyle Hodson was challenged about the earlier disciplinary breach in June 2026 involving another 2nd XI player, and it was put to him that to a casual observer, it may seem as though Newport have a disciplinary problem more widely. He was able to articulate why that would not be a fair observation and how the cases were materially different. He explained the club culture that he was striving to create and how strong messages had been sent to all players and members in the light of the 2026 disciplinary issues.
22. As a Disciplinary Panel we have to be mindful of the overriding purpose of points sanctions against teams/clubs. The primary objective is one of punishment. A team that has poor on/off field discipline should feel the consequence of that in the competition that they are participating in. For most players and teams, winning games and achieving as high a placement in their division as possible is the motivation for turning out each week. Points deductions have the natural effect of undermining that objective. In theory at least, individuals **should** be aware how their own ill discipline can impact on their teammates because the SCCL have gone out of their way to remind clubs each season. Points should also act as a deterrent as well as just a punishment.
23. In the case of Newport CC 2nd XI, they have already received a 20-point sanction this season for a Level 2 breach. As a consequence of that, they sit bottom of Division 3 some 29 points from notional safety (assuming a 2-team relegation scenario). With 4 games left to play of the 2026 season, it would be a reasonable assumption that they may be relegated irrespective of the points deduction we are required to consider and impose. It strikes us in these

circumstances as contrary to the objectives of punishment/deterrence to sanction the team **fully** within the 2026 season. Any number of points we decide to deduct will most likely not change the team's relegation fate.

24. For these reasons therefore, we have decided to impose a 40-point penalty on Newport 2nd XI, with 20 points being deducted immediately and the balance of 20 points suspended for 12 months which will encompass almost the entirety of the 2027 season. In the event that there is a disciplinary breach by the team up to 24 August 2027, then these suspended points will be revived in addition to any other points deductions triggered by the next breach. The purpose of the suspended penalty is to incentivise good behaviour for the team next season and in the knowledge that imposing those points now will not achieve the objective of punishment, given the standings in their division. An immediate 20-point penalty will achieve that objective and, in all likelihood, make it impossible for them to escape relegation to Division 4. But for the 2 serious disciplinary breaches, the team would have most likely stayed in the division. This fact should be obvious and made plain to Newport players.
25. We have considered whether any penalty against the team should be concurrent or consecutive. There were 2 Level 4 breaches established and like in the case of the Respondent, Zaheer Khan, we could take the view that 2 x 40 points deductions would be merited on a consecutive basis. We have concluded that this would not be just or fair. Whilst there were 2 Level 4 charges, this involved the same player during the same incident. It is not the case that other players/team-mates became involved and aggravated the situation; far from it, the reverse is actually true. Team-mates and officials attempted to intervene, de-escalate and prevent further harm being caused by Mr Khan. There was no indication that Newport ignored any clear warning signs about Mr Khan and his propensity to use violence on the field. They acted immediately (on the same day) to ban Mr Khan and expel him from the club for life. Kyle Hodson and the club have been fully co-operative with the disciplinary process and have repeatedly apologised and expressed remorse. They have not attempted to escape responsibility, minimise or condone what took place. Conover CC were complimentary about the manner in which other Newport players responded to the events. Given the totality of those circumstances, we cannot see a justification for a consecutive sanction.
26. Whilst we have concluded that the team sanctions are fair and proportionate, there is a clear warning for the club. This is the second serious breach this season. Whilst this was explained, any further breaches cannot be passed off as coincidental. Further breaches will be seen (and sanctioned) for what they are – a failure to arrest a culture of ill-discipline. Zaheer Khan was a 'new' player to the club, playing a small handful of games before this incident. There was little or no due diligence undertaken before he began to represent the club. We are not suggesting that clubs should formally do this with any new player wishing to join them, but care should be taken not to field unknown quantities simply to make up 11 players in a match. 'Friends' of existing players have always been a mainstay of club recruitment, but this should never be a blind exercise as the risks of doing so are obvious, and very much played out in the case of Zaheer Khan.
27. We have asked the SCCL to distribute our decision to the ECB and regional leagues to ensure that there is no attempt by Mr Khan to seek to play in other leagues and circumvent his playing ban.

28. Finally, we would ask that this judgment is published on the SCCL's website 11 as permitted by GCR Appendix 4 para 31. In recommending publication, via the Respondent's website, we have balanced carefully the privacy of the parties (particularly the Respondent, Zaheer Khan) against the benefits to those involved in the SCCL in both playing and administrative capacities. The principal benefit is, in our view, a better understanding of the disciplinary process within cricket/SCCL and the function of a Disciplinary Panel. It is hoped that this greater understanding will assist all stakeholders within the SCCL to improve both on-field discipline and the disciplinary process generally.

29 August 2026

Richard Barge (Chair)

Adrian Collins (Cricket Shropshire)

Dave Ralphs (SCCL Committee member)