

## **HONG KONG HOCKEY ASSOCIATION DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Case: Manpreet Singh BADHNI (No.32 SSSC) charged with deliberately hitting the face of Shahzad RAFAQUAT, one of the official umpires, with his fist during the match between SSSC A and HKFC A on 2 May 2021 thereby breaching the HKHA Code of Conduct and bringing the game of hockey into disrepute.

Case: Bibal Muhammad MAHMOOD (No.64 SSSC) charged with failing as team captain to control his team members from repeated foul abuse of Shahzad RAFAQUAT, one of the official umpires, during the match between SSSC A and HKFC A on 2 May 2021 thereby breaching the HKHA Code of Conduct and bringing the game of hockey into disrepute.

Case: Sidhu SINGH (No.15 SSSC) charged with deliberately hitting the shoulder of Shahzad RAFAQUAT, one of the official umpires, with his hockey stick during the match between SSSC A and HKFC A on 2 May 2021 thereby breaching the HKHA Code of Conduct and bringing the game of hockey into disrepute.

Case: Lovepreet SINGH (No.48 SSSC) charged with deliberately hitting the leg of Shahzad RAFAQUAT, one of the official umpires, with his hockey stick during the match between SSSC A and HKFC A on 2 May 2021 thereby breaching the HKHA Code of Conduct and bringing the game of hockey into disrepute.

Case: Jasbir SINGH (Team Official SSSC) charged with repeated foul abuse of Shahzad RAFAQUAT, one of the official umpires, during the match between SSSC A and HKFC A on 2 May 2021 thereby breaching the HKHA Code of Conduct and bringing the game of hockey into disrepute.

The meeting was held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 7 p.m. in the offices of Mayer Brown, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor, Prince's Building, 10 Chater Road, Central, Hong Kong.

In attendance:

Disciplinary Committee Members: Nick Hunsworth  
David Khosa  
Ian Fleming  
Simon C.Y. Kwong  
Allah Detta Dad

HKHAMS Representative: Francis Ho

Players charged: Manpreet Singh Badhni  
Bibal Muhammad Mahmood  
Sidhu Singh  
Lovepreet Singh  
Jasbir Singh

SSSC Convenor:	Jagdeep Singh Gill
SSSC Representative:	Mandeep Singh
Match Official:	Ernest Li
Umpire Shahzad Rafaquat's Representative (By Zoom):	Noel Chau

### MINUTES

Each of the individuals charged was asked what their plea was to the charges against them. Each individual pleaded not guilty.

Francis Ho on behalf of HKHAMS presented the cases against each of the individuals charged. He said the cases were based on a combination of statements from individuals present on the day, including various players from HKFC, umpires, Shahzad Rafaquat and Andy Chan and match official, Ernest Li. References to various papers were made to seek to make good allegations in support of each charge, those papers having previously been sent to the individual charged with the notice of the hearing.

Noel Chau, on behalf of umpire, Shahzad Rafaquat, said Mr. Rafaquat was in hospital and could not attend the hearing nor was he prepared to attend any further hearing as he wished to put the matter behind him. She referred to her email in which she set out Mr. Rafaquat's recollection of events.

Ernest Li as the match official gave evidence. He said he personally witnessed Mr. Rafaquat being struck on the leg with a hockey stick by Lovepreet Singh (No.48 SSSC) and being struck on the shoulder with a hockey stick by Sidhu Singh (No.15 SSSC). He said the altercation was heated and there were high words exchanged although in a language he did not understand.

Each individual was then given an opportunity to answer the charge. Each individual was assisted by the SSSC Convenor, Jagdeep Singh Gill and the SSSC Representative, Mandeep Singh, who translated where necessary.

#### Manpreet Singh Badhni

It was explained he was charged with hitting the umpire, Shahzad Rafaquat in the face with his fist. He denied the charge and said he never hit the umpire at all.

#### Bibal Muhammad Mahmood

It was explained he was charged as team captain with failing to control his team from verbally abusing the umpire, Shahzad Rafaquat.

He said he had been given a yellow card and was thus not on the pitch at the time the umpire was surrounded by SSSC players. As the video evidence showed, he sat outside the dugout during the altercation which he thought the correct thing to do as he should keep off the pitch given he was subject to a yellow card.

#### Sidhu Singh

It was explained he was charged with hitting the umpire, Shahzad Rafaquat, on the shoulder with his hockey stick.

He admitted that in the heat of the moment he had swung his stick. He said he did not intend deliberately to hit the umpire. He said he was not sure if his stick had connected with any part of the umpire's body.

#### Lovepreet Singh

It was explained he was charged with hitting the umpire, Shahzad Rafaquat on the leg with his hockey stick.

He denied the charge and said that he did not hit the umpire on the leg with his stick.

#### Jasbir Singh

It was explained he was charged with foul abuse of the umpire, Shahzad Rafaquat.

He said there had been words spoken between him and the umpire at the time of the incident but it had been the umpire who had started the abuse and he had simply reacted in kind.

### **Deliberations**

After hearing the evidence and multiple viewings of the various videos, the DC deliberated and reached the following findings :-

#### Manpreet Singh Badhni

Charge unproven. The only evidence consisted of the statement of the umpire, Shahzad Rafaquat, in Noel Chau's email. In the face of a clear denial from the player and the failure of the umpire to attend and formally identify the alleged assailant, the player had to be given the benefit of the doubt.

#### Bibal Muhammad Mahmood

Charge unproven. While a team captain might reasonably be expected to seek to control his team mates, the explanation by the player that he felt constrained to keep off the pitch in the light of his yellow card was a reasonable one.

### Sidhu Singh

Charge proven. In the light of the player's admission he had swung his stick and the video evidence, it was clear the umpire had been assaulted and struck on the shoulder. Although the blow may have turned out to be a glancing one it was highly dangerous and could have hit the umpire in the face or head. Protection of umpires is of paramount importance and the DC decided a deterrent sentence must be given. The player was therefore suspended from all hockey activities for eight years.

### Lovepreet Singh

Charge proven. Although the player denied the charge and although there was no video evidence, the DC accepted the evidence of the match official, Ernest Li, that he had personally witnessed the hitting of the umpire on the leg by the player with his stick. Again, the DC considered a message needed to be sent by a deterrent sentence that protection of umpires is paramount. As the seriousness of the hit was not as hard as that of Sidhu Singh, the DC decided the player should be suspended from all hockey activities for five years.

### Jasbir Singh

Charge proven. The team manager had admitted engaging in heated words with the umpire, Shahzad Rafaquat, although seeking to suggest the umpire was the instigator. The DC decided the team manager should not be speaking to the umpire in any event, let alone getting into a slanging match with him. Again, the DC felt a clear message needed to be sent that this type of verbal abuse of umpires is completely unacceptable and the individual was therefore suspended from all hockey activities for one year.

There being no further business, the meeting was concluded.



Nick Hunsworth  
Chairman  
HKHA Disciplinary Committee