

GHANA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

DECISION OF THE G.F.A ETHICS COMMITTEE ON ALLEGED UNETHICAL COMMENTS MADE BY MR JOSEPH E. SARPONG (COACH)

0.1 MEMBERS PRESENT

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|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 0.1.1 PHYLLIS M. CHRISTIAN, ESQ. | – CHAIRPERSON |
| 0.1.2 ISAAC ANNAN, ESQ | - VICE CHAIRMAN |
| 0.1.2 DR. CHARLES TAKYI | – MEMBER |
| 0.1.3 MR. WILFRED NENEH ADDICO | - MEMBER |
| 0.1.4 MS. LINDA OFORI-KWAFO | – MEMBER |

0.3 IN ATTENDANCE

- | | |
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| 0.3.1 WILLIAM BOSSMAN | – SECRETARY |
| 0.3.2 OBED TUFFOUR | - INTEGRITY OFFICER |

0.4 PARTIES

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| 0.4.1 JOSEPH E. SARPONG | - COACH |
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1.0 SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

The Ethics Committee received audio recordings in which Coach Joseph E. Sarpong alleged in a radio interview, that “60% of players in the Ghana Premier League and the Division One League smoke marijuana (weed)”. The comments were deemed to have brought the game into disrepute and breached Article 11(2) (a), (b) and (d) of the GFA Disciplinary Code (2019).

A letter was written to Mr. Sarpong requesting that he submits a written Statement of Defence to the Ethics Committee on the alleged comments, or appears at a sitting of the Committee. Mr. J.E Sarpong chose to submit a written Statement of Defence.

2.0 STATEMENT OF DEFENCE

In his Statement of Defence dated 23rd June, 2020, Coach J.E Sarpong stated that:

“I regret to say that I cannot deny making the remarks.

I appreciate that marijuana is a cannabinoid the use of which is prohibited in football, and generally frowned upon.

I did not intend to mean, as the statement suggested, that the majority of players in the leagues, or any of them smoked marijuana.

It would be noted that the statement was made during discussions on coaches’ motivation of players for good performance on the field. I cited my own approach to motivation of a player years ago but noted that I can confirm that the player, who I did not name, in fact indulged in weed on the specific occasion.

I regret the implications of the statement on the name and reputation of the GFA: of players of the Premier League and the Division One League and of football in the country in general.

I sincerely apologise to the GFA and the two leagues and its players.

I hereby withdraw the statement without reservation”.

3.0 FINDINGS AND GROUNDS OF THE DECISION

The members of the Committee have deliberated and taken note of the fact that Mr. Joseph E. Sarpong (Coach) had duly acknowledged receipt of the letter sent to him. Per the options given to him, Mr. Sarpong chose to send a written statement of defence which was received by the GFA on 23rd June, 2020.

The Ethics Committee also notes that Mr. Sarpong cooperated fully and willingly admitted that his comments were inappropriate. He willingly admits that these comments in effect brought the game into disrepute, and thus he was in breach of Article 11 (2) (a), (b) and (d) of the GFA Disciplinary Code (2019).

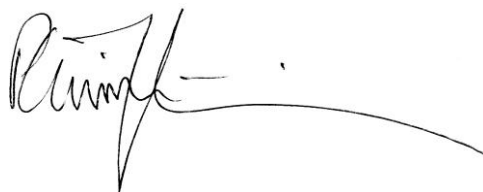
The Committee therefore takes its decision based on Mr. Sarpong’s own admission and withdrawal of the said comments as stated in his letter, and hereby finds Coach Joseph E. Sarpong guilty of breaching Article 22(1) (2) of the GFA Code of Ethics.

However, taking his cooperation, admission of guilt and withdrawal of the comments made into consideration, the Committee hereby suspends the punishment prescribed under Article 22(3).

4.0 COMMITTEE'S DECISION

Having deliberated on the matter in regard to the alleged unethical comments made by Mr Joseph E. Sarpong (Coach) the following sanctions are imposed on said Mr Joseph E. Sarpong (Coach) by the Ethics Committee:

1. Mr. Joseph E. Sarpong (Coach) is served with a warning to be of good behavior, in accordance with Section 2 Article 7(1) (a) (Disciplinary Measures) of the GFA Code of Ethics.
2. Mr. Joseph E. Sarpong shall issue a public retraction of the said comment and shall provide audio evidence of the performance of same to the Committee.
3. Mr. Joseph E. Sarpong shall, for a period of 6 weeks, undertake social work to provide public education and conducting programmes on anti-doping and anti-drug abuse in sports, football and the youth in general. To provide these services, Coach Joseph E. Sarpong shall collaborate with an NGO engaged in such programmes and deemed suitable by the Committee. The NGO shall, at the end of the 6 week period, submit to the GFA, a satisfactory performance report on Coach Joseph E. Sarpong's service.
4. Should Coach Joseph E. Sarpong be dissatisfied with or aggrieved by this Decision, he has within One (1) day of being notified of the grounds of the decision, a right to appeal to the Appeals Committee of the Ghana Football Association, in accordance with Article 55(3) of the GFA Disciplinary Code.



Phyllis M. Christian, Esq. Chairperson,

Ethics Committee

Tuesday September 22, 2020