

**IN THE MATTER OF**

**ENGLAND BOXING**

**-and-**

**MR RICHARD DUNN**

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**DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE DECISION  
(DECISION OF THE CHAIR – BARNBY HONE)**

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*The decision contains some bad language. All the correspondence is taken verbatim from the documents provided to the Committee and has been left in its original form.*

**Introduction**

1. This is the written decision of the Disciplinary Committee, with a Panel Chair sitting alone, in the matter brought against Richard Dunn. The charges and this decision are made in accordance with the England Boxing Disciplinary Code (“the Code). The matter has been decided on the papers. This was agreed by both parties.

**Background**

2. England Boxing, the national governing body of amateur boxing in England, bring one charge against Mr Dunn. That charge is that:

*The alleged misconduct is that you verbally abused an official during a bout that involved your son. In addition, you also threatened said referee with physical violence and posted abusive comments on social media channels.*

3. This charge was sent out in a letter dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.
4. The charge is evidenced by a witness statement from Paul Allen. The substance of the statement states:

*After receiving photo evidence of a comment that has been made on facebook from a coach, Richie Dunn quoting ‘ a referee was saying fuck you and fuck your coach to one club want flogging x in fact im not a fence sitter it was Paul Allen’.*

*This comment regarding myself approaching a boxer and coach/club is total lies. Also, sta2ng wants flogging which the meaning of this is punishment of which said person is hit repeatedly with a whip or s2ck. This coach has actually named myself on social media, which is slander. Making comments like this on social media could incite members of our boxing community in believing said comments, this could cause problems for myself whilst I am out*

*officially. In my many years of experience I have seen this in the past that comments made on social media has incited aggression towards individuals.*

5. Mr Allen is a TTW IBA official. He had officiated at a competition, that included a bout involving the son of Mr Dunn.
6. The statement of Mr Allen is supported by a number of screen shots of Facebook posts which highlight the words used by Mr Dunn.
7. EB wrote to Mr Dunn on the 15 January 2025 setting out their position. This email stated.

*Mr Dunn,*

*After lengthy consideration of this case brought by TT&W and with considerable review of prior communications and incidents regarding your behaviours, it is necessary for England Boxing to convene an independent Disciplinary Panel to hear your case in regards the posting of messages on social media in October of last year and the allegations of threats made to an official.*

*Under normal circumstances this would not reach a threshold for Panel intervention, but due to previous behaviours towards officials dating back to 2019 a stipulation was placed in the charge letter sent to you on 6/3/24 by the then CSM Mr Smith. A copy of this letter is attached and states that, 'Furthermore, should you elect for this option, any future repetitions of this nature will immediately be referred to a full disciplinary panel with a recommendation that your membership of EB be suspended.'. You did indeed elect for the Summary Procedure outcome to be applied and paid the £250 fine, meaning that stipulation is in place.*

*To this end England Boxing formally charges you with misconduct under a breach of the Code of Conduct to 'promote the reputation of the sport and take all possible steps to prevent it from being brought into disrepute' and to 'protect themselves and others involved in the sport from verbal or physical abuse and threatening or intimidating behaviour'. The charge is also brought under the Policy Breaches section of the Social Media Policy bullet points 2, 4 and 8.*

*Due to your previous behaviours and stipulations set out in the Charge Letter of 6/3/24 this current charge is to be referred to the Full Disciplinary Procedure under S12 of the Disciplinary Code. This is in relation to the messages posted on Facebook on 6/10/24 regarding officiating decisions at Hartlepool and a reference to an individual needing 'flogging' and a reference to the referee Paul Allen. Copies of this string of posts are also attached.*

*Under S12 you have 14 days from the date of this email to respond to the Charge stating which of the four processes outlined below you wish to pursue with in order to bring the charge to a resolution:*

- i. Accept the charge and request the matter be dealt with by correspondence only; or*
- ii. Accept the charge and request to appear before a Disciplinary commission to enter a plea in mitigation; or*
- iii. Deny the charge and request the matter be dealt with by a correspondence hearing; or*
- iv. Deny the charge and request the matter be dealt with by a Personal Hearing.*

*Please therefore respond to this charge in writing by 29/1/25 to confirm your intentions. At this point in time, this charge is not open for discussion with the Compliance Team. Communication is to be by email only, unless as the respondent you believe that this form of communication negatively impacts on your ability to appropriately respond.*

*For absolute clarity at this point in time, no interim-suspension is in place, however a suspension from cornering boxers in TT&W Region does remain active. In order to compose this email it has been necessary to review your Locker profile and I can see that your DBS certificate has expired. This means that at this current time you are unable to fulfil your role as a coach with Sunderland Golden Gloves. This is a completely separate issue to the charge above, but it is important that it is highlighted to you here and I will communicate separately regarding this.*

*We recognise that this process may be a difficult one for you and we therefore signpost you to national support groups through the England Boxing website at <https://www.englandboxing.org/wellbeing-and-mental-health-advice-and-guidance/should> should you need to access these organisations.*

8. Mr Dunn responded on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2025 and stated that his preferred option was:

*Accept the charge and request the matter be dealt with by correspondence only That is the response to this matter*

9. Mr Dunn clarified the position in an email on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2025 and stated:

*Please accept that i am in breech of misconduct and i accept all charges regarding these social media comments*

*The only comment i would like to challenge is “The Flogging” comment as i was meaning sell him on to another sport not flog him as this was a punishment during victorian times and the comment was totally misconstrued*

10. The EB did not seek to contest this plea. Therefore, I have to consider the case on this factual basis. I do that and do not consider that flogging has been used in any other context.
11. As the charge is accepted and the factual basis for the charge is not contested, I find that a charge of Misconduct has been proven. I find that Mr Dunn intentionally abused an official, questioning his integrity after he had officiated a number of bouts, including one that his son had taken part in. Furthermore, he did so online, where there was a wide audience to his comments.
12. I note that Mr Dunn has a history of previous similar offending which has all be dealt with at regional level.
13. I also note that he pleaded guilty to the charge and did not require a contested hearing, which was open to him under Rule 12 of the Code.

### **Sanction**

14. I will now consider the appropriate judgement as required under Rule 12 of the Code. I will have to balance what the appropriate sanction is in all the circumstances of the case.
15. In considering the appropriate sanction I have considered Rule 14 of the Code. In particular I have considered the appropriate sanctions open to me under Rule 14. The following options are open to me under Rule 14:
  - (i) *suspension from competition or from taking part in any other capacity in any activity sanctioned by England Boxing;*
  - (ii) *permanent exclusion from competition or taking part in any other capacity in any activity sanctioned by England Boxing;*
  - (iii) *(exclusion or suspension from coaching, boxing or volunteering at a Member Organisation or an Associate or at any event organised by a Member Organisation or an Associate.*
  - (iv) *exclusion or suspension from officiating at a Member Organisation or an Associate or at any activity organised by a Member Organisation or an Associate;*
  - (v) *exclusion or suspension from attending any activity sanctioned by England Boxing or organised by a Member Organisation or an Associate;*
  - (vi) *expulsion, suspension, or exclusion from standing for, or holding, any office, either for a temporary period or permanently.*
  - (vii) *a fine;*
  - (viii) *a caution and/or censure in respect of his, her or its conduct;*
  - (ix) *a suspended penalty, being a penalty, which is only invoked in the event that a person or body, subject to the disciplinary power, commits another disciplinary offence within a stated time of the date of the decision;*

- (x) *the removal of an accreditation either for a temporary period or permanently;*
- (xi) *the imposition of any such conditions on an accreditation as it sees fit;*
- (xii) *a requirement to attend appropriate training;*
- (xiii) *a requirement to pay a contribution to the costs of the disciplinary hearing.*

16. I have also been aware that Mr Dunn is currently barred until February, from cornering boxers at events and shows within his Region. I have considered this in coming to my final determination on sanctions. This was part of a 12-month interim suspension by the regional committee.
17. I am also aware that Mr Dunn, has faced other proceedings from his region, as set out in the correspondence, and had an offence dealt with by the EB upgrade to March 2024 EB Summary Procedure, where he received a £250 fine and reference to repetition of behaviours.
18. I will now consider the aggravating and mitigating factors in this case. I will balance these factors when coming to my consideration of the appropriate sentence.
19. I regard that it is an aggravating factor that this is not the first time Mr Dunn has abused a referee. It is an aggravating factor that he implied that an officiating official was bias and purposely targeting his club. It is further aggravated by the fact that Mr Dunn named Mr Allen. This in my view has caused Mr Allen distress, and anguish.
20. The fact that this abuse occurred after a youth boxing match is a further aggravating factor as it sets a terrible example for the youths involved. It is also an aggravating factor that this abuse was online, which means that there is a wide audience who could carry out further targeting on Mr Allen. Indeed, by naming Mr Allen online, Mr Dunn has opened him to abuse. This was either intentional by Mr Dunn, or it was reckless, and Mr Dunn did not care if it took place. In my view it does not matter which whether it was intentional or reckless, the key is that Mr Dunn did not care the effect on Mr Allen. Mr Dunn clearly understood what he was doing. This was not a heat of the moment decision. Abusing online is also a particularly aggravating factor as it allows the abuse to be spread easily and encourages other to magnify the abuse
21. There are no mitigating factors put in front of me. I have considered that Mr Dunn's early guilty plea should be considered as a mitigating factor.
22. The abuse of officials undermines the very core of every sport, particularly amateur sports. If it is allowed to happen, it will discourage the officials who are needed to sustain the sport. It is particularly disreputable when it happens in connection to youth sport, as in this case, as it sets a terrible example for the youths involved in the sport.
23. When considering the sentence, I need to come to a sentence which would be proportionate given Mr Dunn's conduct. I also have to bear in mind the need to uphold public trust and confidence in the governance of the sport.
24. Given the serious aggravating factors in this case I have come to the conclusion that a period of suspension from all involvement in the sport, is the correct sentence. I make

this decision on the basis that the matter is so serious, as Mr Dunn's conduct undermines the good governance of the sport.

25. Therefore, this sanction needs to make the seriousness of his conduct, to him and also to the rest of the sport. I find that the only appropriate sanction would be a ban from all the sport. I have considered a ban from the sport completely but in my view that is a last resort. Mr Dunn might face this if he commits another offence, but in my view, it is not proportionate at this stage. I have considered a lesser sentence which would be achieved by suspending Mr Dunn from only some activities invoiced with boxing. I do not think this would be proportionate and be enough punishment against Mr Dunn.
26. I now need to consider length of punishment. My starting point in this matter is 6 months.
27. The effect of the suspension will be that Mr Dunn is banned from taking part in any activity that is related to EB. This activity includes:
  - I. Being suspended from competition or from taking part in any other capacity in any activity sanctioned by England Boxing;
  - II. Being suspended from coaching, boxing or volunteering at a Member Organisation or an Associate or at any event organised by a Member Organisation or an Associate.
  - III. Being suspended from officiating at a Member Organisation or an Associate or at any activity organised by a Member Organisation or an Associate;
  - IV. Being suspended from attending any activity sanctioned by England Boxing or organised by a Member Organisation or an Associate;
  - V. Being suspended from standing for, or holding, any office, either for a temporary period or permanently.
28. This is a considerable suspension but proportionate to Mr Dunn's conduct. This should highlight the seriousness the Panel takes Mr Dunn conduct.
29. In my view there are two factors major factors I have to consider in mitigation. First that Mr Dunn, has pleaded guilty to these offences. Mr Dunn has accepted the offences. Second, and more important Mr Dunn has been subject to an interim ban by his region. This was extended to a 12 month ban. This is just to stop him carrying out any cornering activity for the whole 12 months. I find this is still significant factor, along with his early guilty plea as it has been a limit on his activity for a whole year.
30. On the basis of his lengthy ban and Mr Dunn's response, in my view the suspension can be suspended in accordance with Rule 14.1 (ix) of the Code. This suspension will last for 24 months. The 6 month ban will be enforced automatically if Mr Dunn commits another offence that is dealt with by the EB.
31. I have decided not to impose a financial penalty, though this is open to me. In my view this would not be proportionate given the length of the suspension.
32. This decision is dated the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2025, and will have effect of being promulgated from that day. The Appellant has 14 days to appeal this decision as set out in Rule 13.3 of the Code. The decision will therefore have effect on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2025.

33. I have made no order as to costs. There is no application by EB to do so. Even if there was, given the way the matter has been dealt with, I would not make an order for costs against Mr Dunn.
34. Therefore Mr Dunn's punishment for the charge is a 6 month suspension suspended for 24 months, from the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2025.