

Decision of the OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee

passed on 12 March 2026

DECISION BY:

Michael Goodwin (Papua New Guinea), Mark Anthony (Fiji), Kevin Sullivan (New Zealand)

Acting pursuant to Article 86 of the OFC Disciplinary Code

ON THE CASE OF:

South Melbourne FC

(Decision OFCDEC-005)

REGARDING:

Art. 75 of the OFC Disciplinary Code – *Spectator Conduct*

I. SUMMARY OF FACTS

Competition: OFC Professional League 2026

Match: South Melbourne FC – Auckland FC

Date: 21 February 2026

Venue: Olympic Park, Melbourne, Australia

1. The Safety and Security Report of the above-named match states the following:
 - Explanation of the facts of the incident(s):

“At Match Kick Off and 90' minute: SMB supporters ignited approx 5-6 smoke bombs in the spectator seats. In addition, during the course of the match, other items were thrown onto the FOP from the SMB supporters area.

All spectators were searched and wanded at the entry gates. The items brought into the Stadium were deliberately concealed. The Stadium Terms of Admission were clearly displayed at the entry gates.”
 - Explanation of any action taken:

“Persons responsible were not able to be identified.

Security responded to entinguish the smoke bombs.”

2. The Match Director Report of the above-named match states the following:
 - Brief explanation of the facts of the incident:

“South Melbourne FC supporters threw 6 smoke bombs at approximately the 90th minute of the match near the pitch. They also threw receipt paper rolls onto the pitch. I am unable to identify the exact individuals. There was also a South Melbourne FC supporter who cut a hole in the external fence to obtain access to the venue. The individual was stopped and removed from the venue.”

II. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

1. It is accepted that the applicable Regulations for this matter are:
 - a. The OFC Disciplinary Code 2019 (**Disciplinary Code**); and
 - b. The OFC Professional League Competition Regulations 2025 (**Competition Regulations**).

a. Jurisdiction of the OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee

2. Pursuant to Article 48 of the Competition Regulations:
 - 48.1 Disciplinary incidents during the Competition are dealt with in compliance with the OFC Disciplinary Code in force as well as with the relevant regulations, circulars, OFC Statutes and directives, with which the Participating Clubs undertake to comply.
3. In accordance with the OFC Disciplinary Code, Article 2 provides that the Disciplinary Code applies to every match and competition organised by the OFC and pursuant to Article 85 of the Disciplinary Code, the OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee (**Committee**) is authorised to sanction any breach of OFC regulations, which does not come under the jurisdiction of another body.
4. On that basis, it is accepted the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee has competence to decide over this matter.

b. OFC Disciplinary Code

5. It is held the following provisions of the Disciplinary Code are applicable to the facts set out above:

Article 75 Liability for spectator conduct

1. The host association is liable for improper conduct among spectators, regardless of the question of culpable conduct or culpable oversight, and depending on the situation, may be fined. Further sanctions may be imposed in the case of serious

2. The guest Member Association is liable for improper conduct among its own group of supporters, regardless of the question of culpable conduct or culpable oversight, and, depending on the situation, maybe fined. Supporters occupying the guest sector of a stadium are regarded as the guest association's supporters, unless proven to the contrary.
3. Improper conduct includes violence towards persons or objects, letting off incendiary devices, throwing missiles, displaying racist or insulting slogans in any form, or uttering racist or insulting sounds, or invading the pitch.
4. A Member Association's liability as described in par. 1 and 2 also includes matches played on neutral ground, especially at final competitions.

Article 77 Failure to comply

...

3. The right is reserved to impose certain sanctions for safety reasons, even if no infringement has been committed (cf. Art. 8 par. 2).

Article 33 Combined sanctions

1. Unless otherwise specified, the sanctions provided for in the general and special parts of this code may be combined.
2. In less serious cases, the body may only pronounce a reduced sanction or a caution or a reprimand.

c. OFC Professional League Competition Regulations

6. It is held the following provisions of the Competition Regulations are applicable to the facts set out above:

Article 3 Participating Clubs

- 3.4 In addition, each Participating Club shall be responsible for:

3.4.1 the behaviour of their Players, Team Officials, members, supporters and any person carrying out duties on their behalf throughout the Competition, either at home or from their arrival in the host country until their departure;

III. CONSIDERATIONS OF THE DISCIPLINARY AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

7. Pursuant to Article 118, OFC has obtained the following material in support of the above-mentioned facts:
- 7.1. Safety and Security Report [see Attachment 1];
 - 7.2. Match Director Incident Report [see Attachment 2];
 - 7.3. Photo of Alleged Breach [see Attachment 3].
 - 7.4. Video of Alleged Breach [see Attachment 4].

The Committee reviewed the documentation set out at 7.1. and does not have a reason to doubt the reliability of the information provided.

Based on the above information collected to date, the Committee has not been made aware that any personal injuries were suffered, or property damage.

8. The Committee notes correspondence was sent from OFC to South Melbourne FC (**the Club**) on 24 February 2026, notifying the Club of the spectator behaviour along with attachments at 7.1 and possible corresponding sanctions. The Club were requested to provide a response no later than 5.00pm 26 February 2026 (AEDT). The Committee notes no response was received from the Club although an acknowledgement email was received on 6 March 2026 which is referenced further in this decision.
9. The Committee reviewed the video footage of the incident. From the video footage it is apparent that spectators associated with South Melbourne FC (**the Club**) engaged in the facts as outlined in the two reports referenced at 1. and 2. Specifically the video shows the spectators in the South Melbourne FC fan area letting off incendiary devices (blue smoke bombs) as well as throwing projectiles (white receipt paper rolls) onto the field of play near players, ball children, Match staff and Match Officials.
10. Participating Clubs have a responsibility for the behaviour of their Players, Team Officials, members and supporters, either at home or from their arrival in the

host country. The Committee notes that the spectators were present in their home city during this incident.

11. The Committee considers this responsibility to be heightened in a professional football environment, and the Committee emphasises that such actions are unacceptable, particularly at the commencement of the inaugural OFC Professional League where maintaining high standards of conduct and professionalism is essential. Such behaviour requires appropriate sanctioning to deter similar behaviour in future matches.

12. The Committee are not aware of any previous incidents involving such behaviour from the Club. The Committee also acknowledges the correspondence received on 6 March 2026 from the Board of the Club acknowledging the behaviour of the spectators and the commitment to addressing behavioural expectations with their supporter group.

13. The Committee found South Melbourne FC to be in breach of Articles 3.4.1 of the OFC Professional League Competition Regulations and Article 75 of the OFC Disciplinary Code, and notes that it also has the authority to extend sanctions under Articles 75 and 77 of the Code.

IV. SANCTION

14. The Committee notes Article 33 of the OFC Disciplinary Code, which permits sanctions in the Code being combined. Accordingly, after considering the circumstances of the incident, the Committee imposes a monetary fine pursuant to Articles 75 and 77 of the OFC Disciplinary Code on South Melbourne FC of **NZD \$3,000.00, to be paid on or by 12 April 2026.**

15. The Committee was satisfied that such sanctions emphasise the importance of deterring such conduct in future matches and acts as a reminder to all spectators to ensure a safe and successful future of the OFC Professional League.



OCEANIA FOOTBALL CONFEDERATION INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Franck Castillo', written over a horizontal line.

Franck Castillo
General Secretary - CEO

NOTE RELATING TO LEGAL ACTION:

Pursuant to Article 127 of the Code, an appeal may be lodged to the OFC Appeals Committee against any decision passed by the Disciplinary and Ethics Committee unless the sanction pronounced is:

1. A warning;
2. A reprimand;
3. A suspension for less than three (3) matches or up to two (2) months; or
4. A fine of less than NZD1,000 on a Member Association or a club and of less than NZD500 in other cases. (refer Article 127 of the Code).

Eligibility to appeal is governed by Article 128 of the Code and the grounds of appeal are set out in Article 130 of the Code.

Notice of intention to appeal must be received by the OFC Secretariat of the OFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee within 15 days of the communication of this decision.