



12<sup>th</sup> May 2026

## Public Statement

### **Re: Events involving Benjamin Birkhead that occurred during and subsequent to the HPCL Premiership match between Rastrick CC 1<sup>st</sup> XI and Scholes CC 1<sup>st</sup> XI on Saturday 2nd May 2026**

The Managing Executive of the Huddersfield Premier Cricket League acknowledges that events involving Benjamin Birkhead that occurred during and subsequent to the HPCL Premiership match between Rastrick CC 1<sup>st</sup> XI and Scholes CC 1<sup>st</sup> XI on Sat 2nd May 2026 have attracted much attention, speculation and comment across the cricket community of Huddersfield and indeed much further afield.

HPCL is therefore taking the unusual step of providing factual information and explanations to those audiences following the completion of an exhaustive investigation process which has now reached its conclusions and disciplinary decisions.

After very careful consideration of all the information gathered from Benjamin Birkhead, the Clubs involved and the match Umpires, the Sub-Committee has concluded that, in all probability, Benjamin is guilty of attempting to tamper with the match ball in an effort to alter its state and gain an unfair advantage and win what turned out to be a victory for Scholes in a very closely fought game.

This judgement is mainly based on HPCL's Disciplinary Sub-Committee's interpretation of a compelling 17 second film clip which shows Benjamin, in a highly suspicious manner, and for no apparent or explained reason, briefly putting his hand into his left pocket on at least two occasions and then using that left hand to polish the match ball.

The conclusions and decisions of the Sub-Committee are made on what it has judged to be the overwhelming balance of probabilities.

These very serious, concerning and disappointing events amount to an ECB General Conduct Regulations Level 3 offence defined as "a participant conducting himself in a manner and acting in a way which is improper, prejudicial to the interests of cricket, and which brings the ECB, the game of cricket, himself as a cricketer, and his Club into disrepute".

This offence usually attracts a 6 match ban, which is the ECB's standard tariff for such offences. However because the judgement has unavoidably been made on the balance of probabilities, rather than evidence which proves the offence beyond reasonable doubt, the ban has been reduced to 3 matches. This ban includes the matches when Benjamin was withdrawn from playing cricket, both to protect him and pending the conclusion of HPCL's investigations and deliberations.

As an important aside HPCL is saddened that the incriminating film footage was placed into the public domain without context, and it is unclear what the purpose or intentions of the person posting it was. Unfortunately the footage went viral and it is regrettable that this has caused Benjamin to be prematurely insulted, humiliated, disparaged and vilified before conclusions were reached.

If any party is unhappy or concerned about events that take place during or connected to a HPCL match then there are proper processes through which such matters can be raised and addressed. Posting a video clip into the public domain without context or any other accompanying information is absolutely the wrong way to handle things.

In accordance with HPCL's Fair Play Team Points Deduction System this sanction also attracts 9 Fair Play Team Penalties which has resulted in Scholes CC's 1<sup>st</sup> XI being deducted 6 Team Premiership Division Points.

HPCL wishes to make it clear that it will not tolerate such behaviour which it views as totally unacceptable and is taking this opportunity to remind everyone across the cricket community of Huddersfield of the importance of respecting the spirit of cricket and the time honoured and cherished principle of fair play.