

FA Cup clash streakers slapped with three-year ban



THONG AND THE SHORT OF IT: Washington and Hopkinson on the pitch at Blundell Park during Grimsby Town's match against Scunthorpe.

Thong pair invaded pitch 'for a laugh'

by Sam Kinnaird and Simon Faulkner
sam.kinnaird@gsmg.co.uk
Twitter: @GTSamKinnaird

THE two streakers who ran on to Grimsby Town's Blundell Park pitch during their FA Cup clash with Scunthorpe United wearing only thongs, have little interest in the sport, a court heard.

Lewis Hopkinson, 20, of Oxford Street, Cleethorpes, appeared before Judge Daniel Curtis at Grimsby Magistrates' Court, charged with going on to a playing area during a football match.

Fellow streaker Thomas Washington, 20, of Bradford Avenue, Cleethorpes, appeared separately. Both pleaded guilty.

The court heard how Hopkinson, and Washington, 20, ran on to the pitch during the first half of the FA Cup 1st Round game against Scunthorpe United on November 9, which ended 0-0.

Prosecuting in Hopkinson's case, Nick Wyman said: "Having been arrested he replied that he was not especially a football fan and came to the match especially to do this."

Hopkinson said the pair went on to the pitch "for a laugh" and had little interest in football.

Now an infamous picture of the duo on the pitch in their thongs has been made into a charity Christmas card thanks to a Facebook user from Grimsby.

"I didn't do it to cause trouble," he said.

"It's all for a good cause now though, now a photo is being turned into a Christmas card to raise money for Help For Heroes."

Judge Curtis said Hopkinson's actions were "brazen" and caused the match to be halted even though they were on the pitch for less than a minute.

"It might have been amusing but it did disrupt the football match," he said.

"This might well have been a prank but this sort of behaviour is that which should not be allowed at a



BARE CHEEK: Hopkinson outwits a steward who fell while trying to catch him on the pitch.

game," he said. Both were given three-year banning orders from football matches as well as a £200 fine and ordered to pay £20 victim surcharges. Washington was also ordered to pay £80 costs and Hopkinson £85.

"Any breach of this order, which covers any football match, carries a term of imprisonment," the Judge told Washington.

"Your liberty is now going to depend on you keeping to the terms of this banning order."

Martin Howarth, prosecuting Washington, said: "Both were naked apart from wearing g-string undergarments and footwear."

They ran amongst the players, were caught by stewards and escorted off the pitch. They were on the pitch for about 20 seconds.

When interviewed by police, Washington said he had planned the pitch

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Judge Daniel Curtis

invasion three days before.

"He said it was something he wanted to do before he died.

"He said that he accepted it was irresponsible of him but he did it when the ball had gone off and he didn't disrupt the game."

Steven Freestone, mitigating, said his client was "not particularly a football fan" and did not regularly attend Blundell Park.

"He said he waited until the ball went out of play, not that that makes much difference.

"What he wants to stress is this was not aimed at the Scunthorpe fans."

"It is not something anyone would have wanted to have seen and he, with hindsight, acknowledges that and says it's something he won't be doing again."

District Judge Curtis said there appeared to be "very little rhyme or reason" for Washington's actions.

He told him he had committed the offence in front of a large number of football fans who were already in a position of considerable confrontation.

"Whatever your view about your actions being lighthearted it could have resulted in a significant disturbance at the football game."

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£20 bet costs cheeky boys £605

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was nothing like that.

"We were bet £20 to run on the pitch. We did it when the ball was out of play so as not to disrupt the flow of the game.

"And as soon as the stewards told us to stop we did and we went without resisting.

"It was just for a laugh, one of those things you tick off your bucket list.

"We accept that it was a criminal act, but like I said, we gave up when asked.

"We were not scrapping, we are not hooligans, we were just having a laugh."

Lewis said: "There was a lot of cheering from the crowd, we know a few people say we ruined the atmosphere but when we were there we could hear everyone cheering, even the Scunthorpe fans.

"Even the police were having a laugh with us, everyone we met saw it as a bit of fun.

It was just for a laugh, one of those things you tick off your bucket list

Thomas Washington

"We did both realise that we would get criminal records from this and would both more than likely get banning orders."

A picture taken by a Telegraph photographer of the pair was turned into a Christmas card by reader Wayne Ramsey in the hope that it would be sold to raise money for Help For Heroes.

Thomas said: "We didn't know anything about the Christmas card until we saw it on Facebook.

"We just saw how mad it went and what everyone was saying about it.

"We will use it to try to raise some money for Help For Heroes."

Wayne gave the image a festive feel using an application on Facebook after seeing it published on a social networking site after the game.

He said: "When I saw the picture I just thought it would be a really funny idea for a Christmas card.

"I did it as a bit of fun but I think it's great if it can be used to help raise money for Help For Heroes, too."

● **ON THE WEB:** Is streaking a 'harmless bit of fun' or does it ruin sporting events? Share your thoughts online at www.grimsbytelegraph.co.uk



FESTIVE FUNDRAISER: From left, Lewis Hopkinson, Wayne Ramsey and Thomas Washington with the Christmas card.