

## WRITTEN REASONS OF THE FAST TRACK TRIBUNAL



### IN THE MATTER OF A WRONGFUL DISMISSAL CLAIM BROUGHT BY:

**Airdrieonians FC**

**on behalf of**

**Lewis McGrattan.**

1. These are the written reasons for a Determination made by a Fast Track Tribunal which convened on the morning of Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 to deliberate this Claim.
2. In the 51<sup>st</sup> minute of the Scottish Championship fixture between Partick Thistle FC and Airdrieonians FC, played on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2024, the player was sent off for A1 - Serious Foul Play.
3. The Claimants submitted a Claim of Wrongful Dismissal on behalf of the player. In support of this Claim, the club submitted a written statement on behalf of the club, plus statements from the player and Manager, along with clips of video footage of the incident, and still images of the challenge.
4. In order for a Claim of Wrongful Dismissal to be upheld, the Fast Track Tribunal must be satisfied, by way of evidence submitted and not opinion, that the Referee made an Obvious Refereeing Error in dismissing the player.
5. In summary, the Claimant's submission was that the player did not display excessive force or brutality in his challenge. They submitted that the player entered the challenge with the side of his foot, and that the player was not out of control and did not go into the challenge with his 'studs up'. They claimed that the video and still footage showed the player entered from the side, the force was not excessive, and it was the inside of his right foot which slightly caught the opponent. The player and Manager statements referenced that the player went into a 50/50 challenge with his opponent, and that the player's left leg was on the ground. They believed there was a legitimate attempt to win the ball, and with both players fully committed to the challenge, the opponent nicked the ball slightly ahead of the player. If there was any contact it was minimal.
6. The Referee provided a statement explaining his reasoning for the dismissal. He submitted that the player took a heavy touch, and in his attempt to regain possession of the ball, lunged into the challenge with his opponent from the front, and with excessive force. He further added that the player arrived at the challenge after his opponent had cleanly played the ball, and had entered the challenge at high intensity leading with the studs of his right foot, which was raised off the ground. The player made contact above his opponent's boot, and the challenge endangered the safety of his opponent. He deemed this to be Serious Foul Play. He therefore sent the player off.
7. The Fast Track Tribunal viewed video footage in real time and slow motion of the incident leading to the dismissal. They also carefully considered the written submission from the Claimant and club parties, and the Referees report. They also considered the definition from Laws of the Game in relation to Serious Foul Play: (*ref IFAB Laws of the Game 2024/25*)

*A tackle or challenge that endangers the safety of the opponent or uses excessive force or brutality must be sanctioned as serious foul play.*

Lewis McGrattan, Airdrieonians FC

*Any player who lunges at an opponent in challenging for the ball from the front, side or behind, using one or both legs, with excessive force or endangers the safety of the opponent is guilty of serious foul play.*

Having considered all the evidence, the Fast Track Tribunal decided that the Claimants were unsuccessful in demonstrating that an Obvious Refereeing Error had occurred.

Having reviewed the video and written evidence submitted by the Claimant, the Fast Track Tribunal were unable to agree with the Claimant that an Obvious Refereeing Error had occurred. They noted that the Referee had a clear and uninterrupted view of the challenge from a few yards away, and was in a good position to determine the speed, intensity, and control of the player in the challenge.

The video evidence did show that the player had indeed lunged into the challenge, with both legs airborne prior to the challenge connecting with opponent. It was difficult to determine if the connection was above or on the opponent's foot from the video provided. It was though clear that the challenge did cause the opponent to fall after he had cleanly played the ball. Whilst the force may or may not have been excessive, the challenge certainly endangered the safety of the opponent, lunging as noted by the Referee, and this therefore met a threshold to be considered Serious Foul Play.

For a Claim to be successful the Fast Track Tribunal must be satisfied that it is more likely than not, in all of the circumstances of the case, that an Obvious Refereeing Error has occurred. That is the error is 'clear, self evident or easily perceived' (*glossary JPP*).

The Fast Track Tribunal were provided with video evidence which gave a clear view of the incident, both in real time and slow motion, and were unanimous that the Claimant failed to demonstrate in their submission that the Referee had made an Obvious Error resulting in the wrongful dismissal of the player. It was not clear, nor easily perceived, that the Referee had made an Obvious Error in his decision. The still photographs provided were unhelpful in supporting the Claimants case.

The Fast Track Tribunal did not believe this to be a frivolous claim, therefore no further sanction has been imposed.

The Determination of the Fast Track Tribunal is final and binding on all Parties and is not subject to Appeal.