

WRITTEN REASONS OF THE FAST TRACK TRIBUNAL



IN THE MATTER OF A WRONGFUL DISMISSAL CLAIM BROUGHT BY:

Celtic FC

on behalf of

Auston Trusty.

1. These are the written reasons for a Determination made by a Fast Track Tribunal which convened on Tuesday 27th January 2026 to deliberate this Claim.
2. In the 77th minute of the Scottish Premiership fixture between Heart of Midlothian FC and Celtic FC on Sunday 25th January 2026, the player was dismissed from the field of play by the Referee for A4 – Denying the opposing team or an opponent a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity as defined by Law 12.
3. The Claimants submitted a Claim of Wrongful Dismissal on behalf of the player. In support of this Claim, the club submitted video footage showing the incident in question, and written submissions. The Fast Track Tribunal also had access to VAR footage and audio.
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 upon the balance of probabilities, that the Referee made an Obvious Refereeing Error in dismissing the player.
5. In summary, the Claimants submitted the Referee's on-field reaction was that the Heart of Midlothian FC attacker was going into a wide area of the pitch, that there were covering defenders, and that he did not have control of the ball. The Claimants submitted that the Referee's on-field assessment of the incident was correct. They further submitted that the distance between the attacker and the goal meant that there was no "obvious" goal scoring opportunity, that the ball – despite the direction of the play being towards the Club's goal – was running wide, there was a low likelihood of the Heart of Midlothian FC attacker regaining control of the ball, that two of the club's defenders were "both nearby" and that sufficient defensive cover was available.
6. The Referee provided a statement explaining the act which he decided was a DOGSO situation. The Referee concluded that following a VAR review, his view was that the Heart of Midlothian FC attacker would have gained possession of the ball had it not been for the incident. The Referee confirmed that he considered the distance between the offence and the goal, the general direction of play, and the location/number of other defenders. The Referee confirmed his view following an on-field VAR review was that the incident met the DOGSO criteria.
7. The Fast Track Tribunal viewed the video footage of the incident (including the VAR footage and audio) and carefully considered the written submissions from the Claimants. It also considered the definition from Laws of the Game in relation to DOGSO and the requirements that must be considered.

8. Having considered all the evidence, the Fast Track Tribunal decided that the Claimants had unsuccessfully demonstrated that an Obvious Refereeing Error had occurred. On viewing the footage, the Fast Track Tribunal was unanimous in its view that a DOGSO situation had occurred. Whilst the Heart of Midlothian FC attacker was still some distance from the club's goal, the Fast Track Tribunal concluded that the attacker would have had a clear and unimpeded path to goal had it not been for the incident. The general direction of play was towards the club's goal. The ball was not in the view of the Fast Track Tribunal going wide. Had it not been for the incident, the attacker would in the view of the Fast Track Tribunal have regained control of the ball in a relatively central position roughly in line with the corner of the six yard area. The Fast Track Tribunal considered that there was a strong likelihood of the attacker gaining possession and control of the ball. The Fast Track Tribunal concluded that the two defenders mentioned in the club's submission were not "nearby", but were sufficiently far away that they would not have been able to successfully intervene.
9. The Determination of the Fast Track Tribunal was that the Claim be dismissed and the sending off offence and original sanction should be re-imposed.
10. With the Claim having been dismissed, the Fast Track Tribunal considered whether the Claim fell within the scope of Rules 11.9.37 and 11.9.38 of the Judicial Panel Protocol such that an additional match suspension should be imposed. The Fast Track Tribunal considered that the Claim did not merit the imposition of an additional match suspension.
11. The Fast Track Tribunal notes that the Club also made extensive submissions regarding the implementation of the IFAB VAR Protocol. Whilst the Fast Track Tribunal considered the submissions in this regard, they were unable to conclude that an Obvious Refereeing Error occurred in relation to the final decision reached by the Referee.
12. The Determination of the Fast Track Tribunal is final and binding on all Parties and is not subject to Appeal.