

WRITTEN REASONS OF THE FAST TRACK TRIBUNAL



IN THE MATTER OF A WRONGFUL DISMISSAL CLAIM BROUGHT BY:

Blackburn United FC

on behalf of

Christopher Hunter.

1. These are the written reasons for a Determination made by a Fast Track Tribunal which convened on the evening of Tuesday 19th December 2023 to deliberate this Claim.
2. In the 33rd minute of the East of Scotland First Division fixture between Preston Athletic FC and Blackburn United FC played on Saturday 16th December 2023, the player was sent off for A4 - Denying the opposing team or an opponent a goal or 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 of the incident in question and a written submission from the player.
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 Claimant's submission was that the player had not committed a foul in the incident leading to his dismissal. They contended that the opponent mis-controlled the ball and ran into the back of the player as he stepped in front of the opponent to allow the ball to run through to the keeper. They submitted that the opponent 'fell very easily to the ground' and that the keeper could have gathered the ball as well as a covering defender being close enough to have denied an obvious goal scoring opportunity. They also disputed the Referees report regards the player clearly pulling the opponent to the ground.
6. The Referee provided a statement explaining his reasoning for the dismissal. He submitted that the attacking opponent had played the ball past the player into the penalty area. He noted the player clearly pulling the opponent to the ground and that the player was clearly the last defender between the attacking player and the goal, so the attacker was denied an opportunity to shoot on goal from inside the box.
7. The Fast Track Tribunal viewed video footage in real time of the incident leading to the dismissal. They also carefully considered the written submission from the Claimant.

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 evidence submitted by the Claimant the Fast Track Tribunal were unable to agree with the Claimant that a Refereeing error had occurred.

Christopher Hunter, Blackburn United

From the angle presented, and after a number of viewings, both in real time and in slow motion, it was clear that the player had fouled the opposing attacker. There was direct contact with the opposing player with the ball well ahead of the player, and no attempt to play the ball. They also noted that the Referee had a clear and direct view of the incident from a few yards away.

The Fast Track Tribunal were provided with video evidence which gave a single angle view of the incident from distance.

For a Claim to be successful as per the JPP Annex K, section 10.10.4 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 video footage supplied, after multiple reviews, showed a brief coming together of the player and opponent which was sufficient to tumble the attacking player. The did not at any point see the player take possession of the ball nor indeed attempt to play the ball. They could neither see nor not see a pull of the opponent's jersey due to the angle of the camera footage, and other players obstructing the view. The Fast Track Tribunal noted however that the Referee was close to the incident. He had a clear and unobstructed view to determine at the time that this was a foul and a red card offence.

Based on the above the Fast Track Tribunal 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.

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

The Fast Track Tribunal did not believe this to be a frivolous claim, as considered under section 15.9 of the JPP, therefore no further sanction has been imposed.