

WRITTEN REASONS OF THE FAST TRACK TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF A FAST TRACK NOTICE OF COMPLAINT



Name of Club – Celtic FC (“Club”)

Name of Player – Albion Ajeti (“Player”)

1. These are the written reasons for a Determination made by a Fast Track Tribunal which convened on 9th February 2021 to deliberate this Notice of Complaint.
2. The charge against Mr Ajeti was that on or around the 51st minute of the Kilmarnock FC v Celtic FC SPFL match on the 2nd February 2021 he committed an act of simulation in that he did create a wrong/false impression that he had been fouled by Colin Doyle, goalkeeper of Kilmarnock FC, which resulted in Celtic FC gaining a Substantial Advantage. That the said act of simulation caused the referee to make an error of judgment as to whether Colin Doyle made contact with Mr Ajeti whilst challenging for the ball. That the said act of simulation accordingly also caused the referee to make an incorrect decision to award a penalty kick to Celtic FC. The Compliance Officer alleged that Mr Ajeti breached Disciplinary Rule 201 of the Disciplinary Rules for Season 2020/21.
3. The Compliance Officer submitted a video with footage showing the incident in question, the Player Discipline Report from the match plus further supporting documents from the match officials related to a request for statements for a possible Fast Track Proceeding. He also provided copies of the e-mail sent to, and responses from, three former match officials who had been requested to review the video footage as per JPP Section 13, as a possible incidence of ‘simulation’, and if they did deem the incident to be a clear act of simulation they were asked to explain their reasoning why.
4. The Tribunal were also provided with an email on behalf of Mr Ajeti from Celtic FC denying the competency of the Notice of Complaint and requesting that the Notice of Complaint be withdrawn. They noted that if the Notice of Complaint was not withdrawn, they would contest it. The Tribunal were also provided with footage from Celtic FC’s tactical camera coverage of the incident leading to the penalty.
5. The Tribunal heard submissions from both parties in respect to the competency of the Notice of Complaint in the first instance. In summary of this discussion the Tribunal ruled that the Compliance Officer had not acted outwith his authority by citing the player for a breach of Disciplinary Rule 201. The Tribunal noted the Compliance Officer followed the Judicial Panel Protocol laid out in Section 13. He had received unanimous views from three former match officials that they believed the player had committed an act of simulation and was therefore obliged to serve a Notice of Complaint onto the player.
6. The Tribunal noted the submission from Celtic FC that Section 13.4.4 of the JPP states that a Fast Track Notice of Complaint is only competent for breach of Rule 201 regards simulation, if the opposing player challenging for the ball (and who is then penalised for committing a foul) did not make contact with the Alleged Party in Breach in the course of making that challenge or there is clear evidence that the Alleged Party in Breach deliberately initiated contact with the opposing player with the intention of deceiving the referee.

7. The Tribunal noted that the Compliance Officer had simply requested views from each of the former match officials independently if they thought there simulation. No reference was made to 13.4.4 of JPP around the matter of contact.
8. The Fast Track Tribunal viewed the video footage of the incident and carefully considered the written and verbal submissions from the Compliance Officer, representative of Celtic FC and Mr Ajeti.
9. Having considered all the evidence, the Fast Track Tribunal decided that the Notice of Complaint was unsuccessful in demonstrating that Mr Ajeti committed an act of simulation which gave Celtic FC a Substantial Advantage.
10. The Tribunal were able to review at length and from different angles the video footage provided. They noted that Mr Ajeti had reached the ball first, whilst travelling at speed and pushed it away from the Kilmarnock goalkeeper. At the point of his fall he was balanced solely on his left foot which was twisted when contact with the right hand of the keeper was evident on the inner aspect of his ankle.
11. The Determination of the Tribunal was that the Notice of Complaint was Not Proved. To support this Determination, the Tribunal had reviewed footage from both videos in real time and in slow motion. The video from the Compliance Officer was helpful for the Tribunal in reaching their Determination. Within it at, or around, the 19 and 20 second timepoints there were clear views presented of the Player's left ankle twisted so he was balanced on the sidestep only. At that point the goalkeeper's right hand had swung through onto the inner aspect of the ankle. The Tribunal accepted the explanation from Mr Ajeti that he was moving at pace when taken of balance and there was little he could do to avoid falling from the contact.
12. The Determination of the Fast Track Tribunal is final and binding on all Parties and is not subject to Appeal.