



WRITTEN REASONS OF THE FAST TRACK TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF A WRONGFUL DISMISSAL CLAIM BROUGHT BY:

Dunfermline Athletic FC

on behalf of

Graham Dorrans

1. These are the written reasons for a Determination made by a Fast Track Tribunal which convened on Wednesday 8th December 2021 to determine this Claim.
2. In the 61st minute of the Scottish Championship fixture between Hamilton Academical FC and Dunfermline Athletic FC on Saturday 4th December 2021, 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 of IFAB Laws of the Game.
3. The Claimant submitted a Claim of Wrongful Dismissal on behalf of the player. In support of this Claim, the Claimant submitted video footage and photographs showing the incident in question as well as a written submission and written statement of the player.
4. In order for a Claim of Wrongful Dismissal to be upheld, the Fast Track Tribunal must be satisfied, on a 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 was careful not to play the ball with his arm, that the Referee did not have a clear view of the incident, and that the Referee's view was blocked by a Dunfermline Athletic FC player.
6. The Referee provided a written statement confirming the act which he decided was the offence of Denying the opposing team or an opponent a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by handball. In particular the Referee stated that the player moved his body and arm towards the ball and cleared the ball from the goal line with his arm.
7. The Fast Track Tribunal considered the meaning of "Obvious Refereeing Error", as stated in Annex F to the Judicial Panel Protocol 2021-22, being an error at a match by a Referee or a Match Official which is clear or self-evident, or easily perceived.
8. The Fast Track Tribunal also considered the definition from IFAB Laws of the Game in relation to Denying the opposing team or an opponent a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity, as follows:
 - Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a deliberate handball offence the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs.
 - Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the Referee awards a penalty kick, the offender is cautioned if the offence was an attempt to play the ball; in all other circumstances (e.g. holding, pulling, pushing, no possibility to play the ball etc.) the offending player must be sent off.

Graham Dorrans, Dunfermline Athletic FC

- A player, sent off player, substitute or substituted player who enters the field of play without the required Referee's permission and interferes with play or an opponent and denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity is guilty of a sending-off offence. The following must be considered:
 - distance between the offence and the goal
 - general direction of the play
 - likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball
9. The Fast Track Tribunal carefully considered the video footage and photographs of the incident, supplied by the Claimant, as well as the Referee's statement, Claimant's submission and the player's statement. Having done so, the Fast Track Tribunal found that the player kept his arm tucked towards his body, and away from the ball, and played the ball from the goal line with his shoulder. The Fast Track Tribunal further found that the Referee's view of the incident was at a distance, given that he was positioned outside the penalty box as he observed a corner being taken and the resultant play, and may have been impaired by the movement of various players within the penalty box during that play.
 10. Accordingly, having considered all of the evidence, the Fast Track Tribunal found, on a balance of probabilities, that the Referee had made an Obvious Refereeing Error in concluding that the player played the ball with his arm and denied the Claimant's opponent an obvious goal scoring opportunity, and in thereafter dismissing the player.
 11. In making their findings the Fast Track Tribunal, in particular, had the benefit of viewing video footage and photographs when such visual assistance was not available to the Referee when making his decision.
 12. Therefore the Determination of the Fast Track Tribunal was that the Claim be upheld and that the sending off offence and mandatory sanction be rescinded.
 13. The Determination of the Fast Track Tribunal is final and binding on all Parties and is not subject to appeal.