



IN THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE GHANA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Protest Case: No. P 11 – 2021

CORAM

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| 1. Osei Kwadwo Adow, Esq. | - | Chairman |
| 2. Mr. Emmanuel Nikoi | - | Member |
| 3. Mr. Nathaniel Laryea | - | Member |
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LEGON CITIES FC vrs EBUSUA DWARFS FC

PROTEST IN RESPECT OF THEIR GHANA PREMIER LEAGUE MATCH PLAYED AT CAPE COAST STADIUM

PROCEEDINGS

In accordance with Article 56 of the GFA Statutes (2019) and Articles 35(9) of the GFA Premier League Regulations, this Disciplinary Committee (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) considered the depositions from Legon Cities FC (hereinafter referred to as “the Petitioner”) and the Statement of Defence from Ebusua Dwarfs FC (hereinafter referred to as “the Respondent”) with their supporting attachments, the reports of the match officials and the video of the match.

SUMMARY OF FACTS

CASE OF LEGON CITIES FC

Legon Cities FC (the Petitioner) protested against Ebusua Dwarfs (the Respondent) for causing the abrupt end of their Ghana Premier League Matchday 23 game played at the Cape Coast Stadium on Sunday, May 9, 2021.

According to the Petitioner, when the two teams walked onto the field of play for the second half of the game to begin at a time Legon Cities FC was leading 1-0, the Match Officials failed to come out to continue the game due to threats, attacks and incessant intimidation from supporters of the home team within the dressing room areas.

It is the case of the Petitioner that this conduct of the supporters rendered it unsafe for the Match Officials to continue the match. The Petitioner stated that the players of Legon Cities FC waited for the resumption of the game till 5:48pm when the players of both teams departed the field of play.

The Petitioner prayed the Committee to declare Legon Cities FC as winners of the match and accordingly should be awarded with three points and three goals as stipulated in Article 33(2) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.

The Petitioner further prayed the Committee that having been considered as losers of the said match, three points and three goals should be deducted from the accumulated points of Ebusua Dwarfs FC in accordance with Article 33(4) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.

DEFENCE OF EBUSUA DWARFS FC

In its Statement of Defence, Ebusua Dwarfs FC refuted the claim that their supporters positioned themselves in a way to hinder the progress of the match.

The Respondent, rather raised suspicions that the Referee had a preconceived mind to deny Ebusua Dwarfs FC victory in the match. The Respondent further claimed that the Referee was finding a lame excuse in abandoning the match after the first half considering that though Ebusua Dwarfs FC was down by a goal, there was a likelihood that Ebusua Dwarfs FC could win the match.

According to the Respondent, though they were not satisfied with the performance of the Referee, they did not throw any water sachets, water bottles or any other missiles on to the field of play in the course of the match. The Respondent further claimed that the Referee was not heckled from the field of play to the tunnel of the dressing room after he blew the whistle for the end of the first half.

The Respondent stated that the Referee was escorted freely by the security. The Respondent reiterated that over 50 security personnel were deployed at the stadium for the match. The Respondent denied that there was any form of intimidation from its supporters against the Referee and added that the atmosphere at the stadium was serene due to the adequate security presence.

The Respondent reiterated the claim that the Referee had already planned to deny Ebusua Dwarfs FC the points at stake hence the decision not to continue the match though he had adequate security and was given assurances by the security personnel.

According to the Respondent, no rowdy incidents were recorded when they lost at home to Medeama SC, Karela United FC, Asante Kotoko SC and Elmina Sharks FC. The Respondent therefore prayed the Committee to dismiss the protest filed by Legon Cities FC and order a replay since the abrupt end of the match could only be attributed to the behavior of the Referee. The Club further requested for the Referee to be sanctioned for his behavior.

FINDINGS AND GROUNDS OF THE DECISION

The Petitioner stated that the Respondent should suffer forfeiture in accordance with Article 33(2) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.

The Petitioner had alleged that the Match Officials failed to continue the game due to threats, attacks, and incessant intimidation from supporters of Ebusua Dwarfs FC within the dressing room areas.

The Committee considered all the evidence of the match (match officials reports and the video of the match) and finds that the game did not continue after the end of the first half.

According to the Match Reports, on their way to the tunnel after the first half of the game, the home team supporters entered the tunnel, physical assaulted and threatened the Referees adding that the referees won't leave the stadium alive after the game.

The Match Reports indicated that the Police, who were outnumbered by the supporters, escorted three of the Match Officials into the dressing room and later managed to rescue the other Match Official to join his colleagues in the dressing room. The Referee mentioned that at this stage, the Police had to call for reinforcement.

The Match Reports stated that while in the dressing room, a man who introduced himself as Chairman of Ebusua Dwarfs FC and the owner of Hutchland FC accused the Match Officials of taking money from the Legon Cities FC and added that the rumour was everywhere in the stadium that the Referees had been given money by the away team. The Referee further claimed that a management member of Ebusua Dwarfs FC, Mr Ansah, also said that he was aware that the Referees had taken money from Legon Cities FC hence the unfair officiating being handed his club.

The Match Reports also stated that while in the dressing room, the police and national security operatives, who trying to calm the situation down, advised that the reinforcement may not be able to control the massive crowd and added that the safety of the Match Officials cannot be assured.

The Match Reports further claimed that the referees spent over two (2) hours in the dressing room before being moved to the stadium clinic where they had to spend a further thirty (30) minutes. It was then mentioned that the Referees were conveyed to the Regional Police Headquarter in an ambulance. The Referee ended the report by stating that the match ended abruptly after the first half.

It must be noted that the Match Reports are presumed to be factual unless rebutted with clear evidence.

The relevant regulation on this matter is very clear. Article 33 (b) of the GFA Premier League Regulations read as follows:

A team commits an offence punishable by forfeiture of a match where:

- a. that team positions itself in such a way as to render the progress of the game impossible or the player(s) or supporter(s) of the team initiate(s) an act responsible for the abrupt end of the match.*

It is the finding of this Committee that the acts of the supporters of the home team after the first half led to the abrupt end of the match. Ebusua Dwarfs FC were, thus, caught in the web of Article 33(1)(b) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.

The second part of the regulation is very instructive on the subject matter. It simply punishes the club to which, the official(s) or the player(s) or the supporter(s) who initiates the act responsible for the end of the match belongs to.

It is the finding of the Committee that the supporters of Ebusua Dwarfs FC, who should not be in the inner perimeter, the tunnel area or the dressing room area at all but were there, were the initiators of the acts which led to the abrupt end of the match.

DECISIONS

The Committee therefore makes the following decisions:

- 1. It is the holding of this Committee that the Protest of Legon Cities FC shall succeed.**
- 2. That for Ebusua Dwarfs FC initiating the acts responsible for causing the abrupt end of the match, Ebusua Dwarfs FC shall forfeit the match in accordance with Article 33(1)(b) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.**

3. That having been found to have forfeited the match, Ebusua Dwarfs FC shall be considered as having lost the match in accordance with Articles 33(2) and 34(12) of the GFA Premier League Regulations and accordingly, three points and three (3) goals are hereby awarded in favour of Legon Cities FC.
4. That in addition, being the defaulting club, Ebusua Dwarfs FC shall lose three (3) points from the club's accumulated points from their previous matches pursuant to Article 33(5)(a) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.
5. That in addition, being the defaulting club, Ebusua Dwarfs FC is hereby fined Five Thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢5000.00) payable to the GFA, 50% of which shall be paid to Legon Cities FC pursuant to Article 33(5)(b) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.
6. That in addition, being the defaulting club and being the Home Team, Ebusua Dwarfs FC is hereby ordered to pay an amount of One Thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢1,000.00) payable to the GFA, which shall be paid to Legon Cities FC as their Transportation Cost as the Away Team pursuant to Article 33(5)(c) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.
7. That the fines mentioned in Decisions 4 and 5 above, shall be paid to the GFA within fourteen (14) days upon receipt of this Ruling, failing which Ebusua Dwarfs FC shall forfeit their subsequent matches after the said deadline.
8. That should any party be dissatisfied with or aggrieved by this Decision, the party has within one (1) day of being notified of this Ruling to appeal to the Appeals Committee of the Ghana Football Association {See Article 35(10) of the GFA Premier League Regulations}.



Osei Kwadwo Addo, Esq.
Chairman, Disciplinary Committee
Tuesday, May 18, 2021