



IN THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE GHANA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Protest Case: No. P 7 – 2021

CORAM

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| 1. Osei Kwadwo Adow, Esq. | - | Chairman |
| 2. Mr. Emmanuel Nikoi | - | Member |
| 3. Mr. Nathaniel Laryea | - | Member |

HEART OF LIONS FC vs PHAR RANGERS FC

PROTEST IN RESPECT OF THEIR DIVISION ONE LEAGUE MATCH PLAYED AT MAMPONG TOWN PARK

PROCEEDINGS

In accordance with Article 56 of the GFA Statutes (2019) and Articles 35(9) of the GFA Division One League Regulations, this Disciplinary Committee (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) considered the depositions from Heart of Lions FC (hereinafter referred to as “the Petitioner”) and the Statement of Defence from Phar Rangers 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 HEART OF LIONS FC

Heart of Lions FC (the Petitioner) protested against Phar Rangers FC (the Respondent) for instigating acts that led to the abrupt end of their Division One League Matchday 15 Zone 3 match played at the Mampong Town park. Heart of Lions FC prayed the Committee to be awarded with three points and three goals as stipulated in Article 33.1(b) of the GFA Division One League Regulations.

According to the Petitioner, in the 84th minute of the match a player of the Respondents was cautioned by the Referee for fouling a player of the away team. According to the Petitioner, when the player was being attended to by the medics, an official of Phar Rangers was shown the red card and was asked to move out of the inner perimeter. The Petitioner further claimed that supporters of the home team started throwing stones at the Referee. The Petitioner alleged that a stone hit the jaw of the Referee which resulted in an instant swell.

The Petitioner indicated that the Referee then decided not to continue the match due to the injury and the atmosphere at the stadium. It is the case of the Petitioner that after some hold up and pleadings from Officials of Phar Rangers, the Referee agreed to continue the match only if the Security and Officials of the home team drive the supporters away from where they were standing. The Petitioner continued that the

situation was same after 30 minutes and the Referee then brought the game to an end after which the supporters held the Match Officials hostage.

The Petitioner therefore concluded that the Officials and Supporters of Phar Rangers instigated the abrupt end of the match and by Article 33.1(b) of the Division One League Regulations which states that, "A team commits an offence punishable by forfeiture of a match where:

"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".

The Petitioners also cited Article 33(2): "In respect of offences (a) to (e), no matter what the scores shall be at the time of the offence or at the end of the match, the offending team shall be considered as having lost the match and accordingly three (3) points and three (3) goals shall be awarded in favour of the other team, unless the innocent team is leading by a margin of more than three (3) goals at the time of the offence or when the match comes to an end, in which case, the scores will stand."

The Petitioners then prayed the Committee to declare Heart of Lions as winners of the said match and accordingly award them with three points and three goals in accordance with Article 33.1(b), 33.2, 33.7, 33.12 and 33.5(a) (b) (c) of the Division One League Regulations and Article 22.2 of the GFA Disciplinary Code.

DEFENCE OF PHAR RANGERS FC

In its Statement of Defence, Phar Rangers described the claim by the Petitioners that the supporters behind the inner perimeter started throwing stones at the Referee and one of the stones hit the jaw of the referee as a figment of their own imagination which is far from the truth. The Respondents requested that the Committee investigate this claim by requesting an independent medical report.

The respondents further alleged that the Petitioner was bent on filling this protest by allegedly colluding with the Match Officials to bring the game to an end without any violent act. The Respondent prayed the Committee to conduct further investigations into this matter and called on the Committee to scrutinize the Referees reports.

The Respondents prayed the Committee not to set a bad precedent in future matches where away teams may orchestrate a seemingly violent atmosphere to get home teams to suffer forfeiture. They claimed that No official of the Phar Rangers instigated any violence at the time the match was 0-1 so why would they instigate violence after equalizing.

The Respondents concluded by alleging that Heart of Lions could have orchestrated a ploy to secure boardroom points.

FINDINGS AND GROUNDS OF THE DECISION

The Petitioner stated that the Respondent should suffer forfeiture for violating Article 33(1)(a) and (b) and Article 34(4) of the Division One League Regulations.

The Petitioner had alleged that Officials and Supporters of Phar Rangers FC caused the abrupt end of the match played between the two clubs at the Mampong Town Park.

The Committee considered all the evidence of the match (match officials reports and the video of the match) and finds that the game was halted on 84th minute after the Referee was hit by a stone at the jaw.

The Referee's Report and the video of the match clearly indicated that the referee halted the game after Referee (Robert Musey) was hit by a stone.

The Committee finds that an Official of the home team official George Opoku Weah who was red-carded incited the spectators to throw stones at the referee (Robert Musey) and the fourth referee.

The Committee further found after the match was abandoned, the Referees were held hostage for till police reinforcements was called in to ensure our safety from the venue.

The relevant regulation on this matter is very clear. Article 33(1)(a) and (b) of the Division One League Regulations read as follows:

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

- a. that team walks off the field of play or refuses to continue play.*
- b. 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 on the 84th minute led to the abrupt end of the match. Phar Rangers were, thus, caught in the web of Article 33.1(a)(b) of the Division One 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 Phar Rangers FC who should not be in the stadium due to COVID-19 protocols in the first place were the initiators of the acts which led to the abrupt end of the match.

The supporters of Phar Rangers FC initiated acts against the match officials that led to the abrupt end of the match.

DECISIONS

The Committee therefore makes the following decisions:

1. That it is the holding of this Committee that the Protest of Heart of Lions FC shall succeed.
2. That for Phar Rangers FC initiating the acts responsible for causing the abrupt end of the match, Phar Rangers FC shall forfeit the match in accordance with Article 33(1)(b) of the Division One League Regulations.
3. That having been found to have forfeited the match, Phar Rangers FC shall be considered as having lost the match in accordance with Articles 33(2) and 34(12) and accordingly, three points and three (3) goals are hereby awarded in favour of Heart of Lions FC.
4. That in addition, being the defaulting club, Phar Rangers FC shall lose three (3) points from the club's accumulated points from their previous matches pursuant to Article 33(5)(a) of the Division One League Regulations.
5. That in addition, being the defaulting club, Phar Rangers FC is hereby fined Two Thousand and Five Hundred Ghana Cedis (GH¢2,500.00) payable to the GFA, 50% of which shall be paid to Heart of Lions FC pursuant to Article 33(5)(b) of the Division One League Regulations.
6. That in addition, being the defaulting club and being the Home Team, Phar Rangers FC is hereby ordered to pay an amount of Five Hundred Ghana Cedis (GH¢500.00) payable to the GFA, which shall be paid to Heart of Lions FC as their Transportation Cost as the Away Team pursuant to Article 33(5)(c) of the Division One 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 Phar Rangers 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 Division One League Regulations}.



Osei Kwadwo Addo, Esq.
Chairman, Disciplinary Committee
Monday, May 10, 2021