



## IN THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE GHANA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

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Protest Case: No. P 31 – 2021

### **CORAM**

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|--------------------------------------|---|----------|
| 1. Mr. Osei Kwadwo Adow, Esq.        | - | Chairman |
| 2. Mrs. Lorraine Crabbe-Ababio, Esq. | - | Member   |
| 3. Mr. Nathaniel Laryea              | - | Member   |
| 4. Mr. Emmanuel Nikoi                | - | Member   |
| 5. Ms. Elsie Nana Acheampong         | - | Member   |

William Bossman	-	Secretary
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**BRONG AHAFO UNITED FC vrs REAL TAMALE UNITED FC**

**&**

**REAL TAMALE UNITED FC vrs BRONG AHAFO UNITED FC**

**-**

**CROSS PROTESTS IN RESPECT OF THE DIVISION ONE LEAGUE  
MATCH PLAYED AT SUNYANI CORONATION PARK**

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### **CONSOLIDATION OF THE TWO CROSS PROTEST CASES**

The two clubs, Brong Ahafo United FC and Real Tamale United FC protested against each other in relation to the same match. The Disciplinary Committee has therefore consolidated the two Protest cases and hereby provides its decision in respect of the two Protest cases as follows:

### **PROCEEDINGS**

The Disciplinary Committee hereby provides its decision in respect of the two Protest cases as follows. The decision to consolidate the two protests is because it concerns the same match with the same Match Reports.

### **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:

- a) the depositions from Brong Ahafo United FC (Petitioner) and Real Tamale United FC (Respondent) in respect of the Protest filed by Brong Ahafo United FC against Real Tamale United FC.
- b) the depositions of Real Tamale United FC (Cross-Petitioner) and Brong Ahafo United FC (the Cross-Respondent) in respect of Protest filed by Real Tamale United FC against Brong Ahafo United FC

with all the supporting attachments, the reports of the match officials and the video of the match.

## **SUMMARY OF FACTS**

### **CASE OF BRONG AHAFO UNITED FC (PROTEST BY BRONG AHAFO UNITED FC)**

Brong Ahafo United FC (the Petitioner) protested against Real Tamale United FC (the Respondent for causing the abrupt end of the Matchday 27 game at the Sunyani Coronation park contrary to Article 33(1)(b) of the GFA Division One League Regulations.

It is the case of the Petitioner that Brong Ahafo United FC liaised with the Brong Ahafo Regional Football Association to put in place all necessary security arrangements for the match between the two sides. The Petitioner mentioned that the security for the match included military, police and BNI personnel.

The Petitioner stated that it acted in accordance with FIFA Stadium Safety and Security Regulations particularly Articles 6(e), 7(3) (a), (c), (e) and (k) and ensured there was segregation and proper zoning at the Stadium due to historical antecedents and the number of supporters from the away team. The Petitioner added that supporters of the away team were assigned to the Jubilee stands as communicated to the away team at the pre-match technical meeting.

The Petitioners argued that before the start of the match, the supporters of the away team threw several objects onto the field of play and were restrained by the military on duty. The Petitioner added that the Referee denied the home team two penalties and awarded a dubious penalty to the away team.

According to the Petitioner, this act of the Referee led to some perceived infiltrators entering the field to harass the referee, a development the Petitioner condemned unreservedly. The Petitioner however added that due to the heavy security presence, the police on duty brought the situation under control by apprehending the hoodlums.

According to the Petitioner, Referee Maxwell Hanson surprisingly changed his decision and adjudged that there should be drop ball instead of the earlier penalty decision. The Petitioner added that the decision to overrule the earlier penalty decision was met with incessant throwing of stones and other offensive objects onto the field by the away team's supporters who were seated at the Jubilee stands. The Petitioner indicated that it had to take tact and diplomacy on the part of the security and the playing body as well as officials of RTU to bring the situation under control (video attached) after which play eventually resumed to bring the first half to a closure.

The Petitioner stated that the Referee decided not to continue the game and with darkness setting in, he engaged the two clubs, club officials and the heads of the security present with the assurance that the game will continue the following day at 10am. It is the case of the Petitioner that Referee Maxwell Hanson and the Away team failed to show up for the match as agreed.

It is therefore the submission of the Petitioner that referee Maxwell Hanson throughout the game per his actions and inactions positioned himself to mar the beauty of the game and to cause an abrupt end. The Petitioner said that its claim is evidenced by the failure of the referee and the away team to show up for the continuation of the second half of the match as agreed.

The Petitioner also alleged that the away team at all material times proved to be the aggressors believing that per recent rulings, the home team would be adjudged to have caused the abrupt end of the match. It added that the regulations of the Football Association and some decided cases have shown that an away team supporters can proof to be aggressors.

The Petitioner referred the Committee to the report of the GFA Security Committee members who were deployed to the Coronation park for the match.

### **CROSS PROTEST OF REAL TAMALE UNITED FC**

The Respondent did not file a Statement of Defence but choose to also file a counter protest.

The Cross-Petitioner, Real Tamale United FC protested against Brong Ahafo United FC (Cross-Respondent) for causing the abrupt end of the Division One League match between the two sides contrary to Article 33.1(b) of the Division One League Regulations.

According to the Cross-Petitioner, fans of the home team invaded the field of play to assault the referee which caused the abrupt end of the match. It is the case of the Cross-Petitioner that the actions of fans of the home team is in contravention of 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 Cross-Petitioner attached pictures and videos of the alleged assault on the referee at the Sunyani Coronation park. The Cross- Petitioner thus sought the reliefs under Articles 33(2), 33(5), 33(7), 33(10), 33(11), 33(12) of the Division One League Regulations.

### **DEFENCE TO PROTEST BY BRONG AHAFO UNITED FC**

It is the case of the Cross-Respondent that the match between the two sides did not end abruptly as stated by the Cross- Petitioner. The Cross-Respondent stated that the Cross-Petitioner failed to give a chronological event of what happened before, during and after the match. The Cross-Respondent claimed that the narration of the Cross-Petitioner is to deceive the Disciplinary Committee into believing that the match failed to travel the full distance due to the actions and inactions of the home team and its supporters.

The Cross-Respondent admitted that there was a holdup caused by miscreants who went into the inner perimeter and were subsequently arrested by the security on duty. The Cross-Respondent also said that there were some hold-ups which occurred due to the RTU supporters who were throwing stones from the jubilee stand of the stadium.

It is the case of the Cross-Respondent that the actions of the away team held up the game for a considerable time. The Cross-Respondent added that when calm was restored, the referee continued and successfully brought the first half to an end without any further hitches.

The Cross-Respondent stated that the Referee refused to continue the second half and waited until there was poor visibility before calling the two teams into a meeting that he was unable to continue the game due to poor visibility. The Cross-Respondent added that it was agreed between the officiating officials and the two teams as well as the security personnel present that the game will continue at 10am. It is the case of the Cross-Respondent that the said meeting was captured in a video recording attached to the protest.

It is therefore the case of the Cross-Respondent that Referee Maxwell Hanson and Real Tamale United connived to abandon the match and shift the blame on the home team. The Cross- Respondent thus prayed the Committee to invite the views of various independent persons assigned by the GFA to observe the match.

### **EVIDENCE FROM OFFICIAL VIDEO**

1. From the video recording of the match, it was found that after kickoff the match was halted in the 40<sup>th</sup> minute after Referee Maxwell Hanson awarded a penalty to Real Tamale United FC.
2. It was observed that immediately after the referee awarded the penalty, stones and other objects were thrown into the inner perimeter by fans of the Brong Ahafo United FC
3. Its was further observed some of the officials and fans of Brong Ahafo United FC entered the field of play and assaulted the Referee verbally and physically.
4. An unknown man in a yellow shirt and black trousers suspected to be a fan of the home team slapped the Referee in the face while the players and other officials of Brong Ahafo United FC rushed on the Referee.
5. In a video, fans of Brong Ahafo United FC were seen chasing the Referee on the field of play and attacked him physically after they caught up with him.
6. The Committee also noted that the police personnel had to protect the match officials in the center of the pitch while fans of Brong Ahafo United FC threw stones and other objects onto the pitch.
7. It was also observed from the video that the match was held up for several minutes as a result of the fans who were in the inner perimeter. The Referees were also being treated on the field of play
8. It was further observed that after the military personnel calmed the situation, the referee restarted the game by changing his earlier penalty decision.

9. The Committee noted that after the Referee changed the decision, fans of Real Tamale United FC started throwing stones and other objects into the inner perimeter.
10. The Committee also observed that the game was again held up for several minutes before the military personnel calmed the situation.
11. It was observed that the match continued till the end of the first half after which one of the Assistant Referee's sought for medical attention on the pitch.
12. In the video, the Match Officials and the Away team were held up in the inner perimeter for several minutes. The Match Officials were seen interacting with the members of the GFA Security Committee.

### **REFEREES REPORT**

*After I awarded the penalty instantaneously, a number of the spectators believed to be fans of the home team rushed on me. The first one slapped me. Suddenly, the other spectators believed to be fans of the home team rushed to my direction and I bolted to the center circle and with the force with which they came, I had no option than to start running for my life. At a point, their numbers kept increasing and they chased me all over the field of play and eventually, I fell. It was there I was severely, brutally and mercilessly beaten. Some used their fists, others used their legs to kick my ribs and waist and one was in a possession of a dog chain. It was there about three (3) uniformed police personnel came to my rescue and pulled me to the technical bench of the away team. Dissatisfied, the irate fans of the home team followed and continued beating me with blows on my head, some pulling and squeezing my testicles simultaneously and from there, I could not endure the pain so I started screaming "mewu oo, mewu oo, mobekume oo", to wit, "I'd die, I'd die, you'd kill me". It was there a number of uniformed police personnel came to my rescue. They were about eight (8) in number. I then told them I would not be able to continue the match because of the ordeal I had been through and I had also started experiencing body pains. Surprisingly, the police officers said they could not guarantee my safety if I do not go on with the match. My assistants then came to me. Recalling their ordeal, Assistant one (1) said he was beaten till he fell and Assistant two (2) said he was given several slaps and a blow to his head, both attacks were from spectators believed to be fans of the home team. At this juncture, the armed military men who were outside the inner perimeter joined. In our terrible state, the three (3) of us (myself and the two assistants) decided to discontinue the match but the police reiterated that our safety would not be guaranteed should the match be halted. The armed military men also said it would be very difficult for us to leave the field of play if we do not continue the match. Some spectators believed to be fans of the home team who found their way into the inner perimeter started chanting war songs and also said the match must continue. These spectators were still armed with stones, dog chains, cutlasses, etc. The intensity of the threats and in order to save our lives, we (myself and 2 assistants) decided to continue with the match. The series of incidents transpired for about thirty (30) minutes. Instead of restarting the match with a penalty to the away team, I restarted with a drop ball to avoid attacks from the fans of the home team. This did not go down well with the supporters believed to be fans of the away team who also retaliated by throwing objects such as stones, sticks, sachet water and metallic objects onto the field of play. This also delayed play for about 15 minutes. The head of the military, players and technical team of the away team then appealed to the spectators believed to be fans of the away team which they complied and the match was restarted. In the 45th minute, I ended*

*the first half. Heading to the dressing room after I blew the whistle for the end of the first (1st) half became almost impossible for us, as the fans of the home team besieged the entrance to the dressing room so we were held hostage on the field of play. After about 15 minutes of being held hostage by the irate fans, the police and the military officers approached us (myself and assistants) and asked whether we would not restart the match and I told them our lives were in danger. They then informed us they had brought in both police and military reinforcement. I was then experiencing body pains and was bleeding from cuts on my back whereas the Assistant one (1) complained of severe headache, swollen head and severe body pains and Assistant two (2) also had some scratches around his neck. The medical team then came in to give us (Assistant one (1) and I) first aid treatment. There, the spectators, believed to be fans of the home team threatened that if we dared feigned injury and abandoned the match, we would be killed. It was there the Sunyani District Police Commander arrived at the scene and also asked whether I would be able to continue the match. I replied in the negative and when he inquired, I told him we were incapacitated hence our inability to resume the match. Both the military and police insisted we restart the match because it would be very difficult for them to escort us from the field. Simultaneously, the spectators of the home team were still chanting, still armed and still insisting we start the match. this continued to happen whilst still held hostage on the field of play till darkness began to set in so we (myself, assistants and match commissioner) called the two (2) captains and told them the match would have to be postponed to the next day since darkness had set in and also, our lives were in danger but that was actually a ploy for us (myself, assistants and the match commissioner) to end the game, hence the match ended abruptly. There was military reinforcement who together with the police escorted us to the dressing room and while at that, the irate spectators believed to be fans of the home team kept throwing stones in our direction and towards the dressing room. One of the stones hit the window of the dressing room but fortunately, no damage was caused. However, my communication gadget got damaged in the course of the attack. Also, my cards and recording sheets were lost during the attack and mayhem, hence, cautions on reckless tackles on opponents and misconducts could not be incorporated into the report.*

## **MATCH COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

*On the 40th minute of the game, the referee awarded a penalty in favour of the Away Team ( R T U). Immediately the referee pointed at the penalty spot, I overheard the Assistant Referee I and the 4th Referee shout into the communication gadget that, it was not a penalty, but the referee refused to change his decision. some fans believed to be supporters of B A United jumped the inner perimeter and invaded the field of play, and attacked the officiating officials. The referee kept running whiles they were chasing him. They finally caught him and assaulted him, beating him severely. Some of the fans also attacked the assistant referees. Initially, the policemen kept on watching whiles these fans were assaulting the referee. When they saw that, things were getting out of hand, then some of the policemen rushed to rescue the referee but could not contain the angry fans of B A United. The military was called in. They came to rescue the referees. This brought the game into 29 minutes holdup. When sanity was restored, the referee changed his decision from the penalty to drop ball. When the ball was dropped, whiles play continued, R T U fans also became furious and threw stones, sachet water, and any missiles they could lay their hands on onto the field. The referee stopped the game. All the Officiating Officials, players, and officials of both teams massed ourselves up at the center of the field to prevent any injury. The security was called to action, it took them 15 minutes to bring the situation under control. The referee continued the game and ended the first half. When the first half came to an end, fans of both teams massed themselves with stones, sticks, and other offensive weapons at the tunnel leading to the dressing room. The security tried all possible means to drive them away, but could not contain them. We remained on the*

field of play throughout the half time. For the second half to resume, the referee told me that, he was not secure, therefore cannot continue the game. 8 additional Military men came to beef up the security, yet, the referee still stood by his decision that, he was not secured to continue the game. We remained on the field of play for about 1 hour 30 minutes. Officials of B A United tried all possible means to convince the referee to continue the game, but all move futile. Fans of both teams also made it clear that, if the referee did not continue the game, the match officials will not leave the stadium. They were prepared to shed blood for anything that will happen. At 5:42 pm, the referee called the captains of the two teams and told them that, visibility is not clear to continue the game, therefore he is calling off the match and the second half will be played the next day at 10:00 am. Later the referee told me that, he called off the match under duress, just to calm tempers down and to pave way for the officiating officials to have their way out of the stadium. The joint security then came and surrounded the officiating officials, matched us into the dressing room. On our way to the dressing room, fans of both teams were throwing stones and sachet water onto the officiating officials and the security personnel, but the security managed to send us into the dressing room. The reason of the away team being the referee has denied them a penalty. and the reason of the home team is that, why should the referee end the match. We remained in the dressing room for about 45 minutes. Fans of both teams started throwing stones at each other while some were also directing their stones to the dressing room. The Military started giving warning shots to disperse the rowdy crowd. Later the Military brought a Pick - Up Vehicle to whisk us from the stadium to the divisional police station. On our way to the police station, some fans massed themselves at the principal street to attack us, the Military kept on giving warning shots till we got tho the Police station. Later the Military and the police also led the Away Team (RTU) to the police station. An arrangement was made by the GFA security coordinators which enabled the military and the police to escort the Away Team out of the town (Sunyani). At the police station, the officiating officials were asked to write an individual report to the police which we did. Later there was a rumor that, some fans of both teams had laid ambush on the Sunyani - Kumasi road, waiting for the officiating officials to attack us. We were advised by security experts not to travel that, night. LT Col. Asare Bediako, the GFA Security Coordinator, made an arrangement with the military which made us pass the night at the residence of the Regional Military Commander by name LT Col, Kwarteng. At his residence, the Commander himself fed us with food and drinks, he also gave us a comfortable bed to lay our heads on. At 4:00 am the next day, LT Col Kwarteng gave us a Pick - Up Vehicle which brought us to Kumasi.

Both cases raise the issue of forfeiture for a violation of Article 33(1)(b) of the GFA Division One League Regulations.

The relevant articles state 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.*

After examining the **match video**, reports of the Match Officials, the Security Committee's post-match report, the Committee finds that by attacking the Referee in the 40<sup>th</sup> minute of after Referee Maxwell Hanson awarded a penalty to Real Tamale United FC the supporters of Brong Ahafo United FC **initiated the acts** that led to the abrupt end of the match.

Though the Referee continued the game till the first half ended, it was observed that the Referees were prevented held hostage and thus prevented from leaving the field to the dressing room during the half time by the supporters and some officials of the Brong Ahafo United FC. There were threats to their lives by way of war songs and the wielding of dangerous items to be used as weapons to harm and kill the Referees. Without a doubt, the supporters of Brong Ahafo United FC **initiated the acts, acts which intended to cause bodily harm to**

**match officials .These atrocious acts and unsporting behavior of the home team** led to the abrupt end of the match.

The Committee noted with great disappointment and concern that the tensed atmosphere at the stadium which included the Referees being held hostage would have put them in great fear and panic for the safety of their lives .This is moreso when they had been brutally attacked by the home team,

From the Report of the Match Officials and the Security Committee, the Committee found that the Referee's decision to call off the match and reschedule for the next day was the only way to preserve their lives as well as enable the fans to allow the Match officials to exit from the inner perimeter.

BA United FC were, thus, caught in the web of Article 33.1(b) of the GFA 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.

Therefore, in the instant circumstances, it is the position of the Committee that the unconscionable conduct of the supporters of Brong Ahafo United FC led to the abrupt end of the match.

In its totality the acts of the supporters of both Clubs is shameful, albeit ,the Committee would reserve its comments on the misconduct of both club supporters as both are subject of misconduct charges that would be handled separately by the Disciplinary Committee.

## **DECISIONS**

**The Committee therefore makes the following decisions:**

- 1. That the Protest of Brong Ahafo United FC is dismissed.**
- 2. That the Protest of Real Tamale United FC shall succeed.**
- 3. That for Brong Ahafo United FC initiating the acts responsible for causing the abrupt end of the match, Brong Ahafo United FC shall forfeit the match in accordance with Article 33(1)(b) of the Division One League Regulations.**
- 4. That having been found to have forfeited the match, Brong Ahafo United 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 Real Tamale United FC.**
- 5. That in addition, being the defaulting club, Brong Ahafo United 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.**
- 6. That in addition, being the defaulting club, Brong Ahafo United 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 FC pursuant to Article 33(5)(b) of the Division One League Regulations.**



7. That being the defaulting club, Brong Ahafo United shall pay an amount of Five Hundred Ghana Cedis (GH¢500) as the transportation expenses of Real Tamale United FC
8. That the fines mentioned above, shall be paid to the GFA within fourteen (14) days upon receipt of this Ruling, failing which Brong Ahafo United FC shall forfeit their subsequent matches after the said deadline.
9. 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.



**Osei Kwadwo Adow, Esq.**  
**Chairman, Disciplinary Committee**  
**Thursday, July 22, 2021**