



IN THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE OF THE GHANA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Protest Case: No. A 10- 2020

CORAM

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| 1. Osei Kwadwo Adow, Esq. | - | Chairperson |
| 2. Mrs. Lorraine A. Crabbe Ababio, Esq | - | Member |
| 3. Emmanuel Nikoi | - | Member |
| 4. Nathaniel Laryea | - | Member |
| William Bossman | - | Secretary |
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BEREKUM CHELSEA FC VS Wafa

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PROTEST IN RESPECT OF THEIR GHANA PREMIER LEAGUE MATCHDAY 22 MATCH PLAYED AT THE GOLDEN CITY PARK

PROCEEDINGS

In accordance with Article 56(3) of the Statutes of the Ghana Football Association (GFA) and Articles 35 of the GFA Premier League Regulations, the Disciplinary Committee (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) considered the depositions from Berekum Chelsea Football Club (hereinafter referred to as “the Petitioner”) and West Africa Football Academy (hereinafter referred to as “the Respondent”) together with the supporting attachments and the reports of the match officials.

SUMMARY OF FACTS

CASE OF BEREKUM CHELSEA FC

Berekum Chelsea FC (the Petitioner) protested against Wafa (the Respondent) for breaching Articles 16(1)(c) and Article 20(2) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.

According to the Petitioner, the Respondent failed to adhere to orders determined by the Ghana Football Association in a Matchday 22 game played at the Berekum Golden City Park. The Petitioner cited Article 16(1)(c) of the Premier League Regulations as the basis of the case of the club. The said regulation states that:

“Where there is a clash of colours in respect of the goalkeeper’s strip and the outfield players’ strip, the goalkeeper shall change to a reserve strip. Any clash occurring between the colour of the two goalkeepers’ strips, the goalkeeper of the visiting team shall change his strip. In the event that an outfield player is replacing the goalkeeper, the outfield player shall appear in his team’s registered goalkeeper’s shirt without a number.”

The Petitioner stated that during the game, WAFA exhausted their substitutions by making three changes in the game. According to the Petitioner, in the later part of the game, the goalkeeper of WAFA got injured and was taken off the field of play.

The Petitioner indicated that the operative word is the outfield player shall appear in the registered strip of his club's goalkeepers without number.

The Petitioner then explained that Player Abdul Basit Issah was registered and allocated the number 36 shirt of WAFA's registered strip. It is the case of the Petitioner that Player Abdul Basit Issah who was an outfield player in the match was chosen by his technical team to replace Goalkeeper Osei Kwadwo Bonsu who was wearing jersey number 40 on the day of the match. It is the case of the Petitioner that Abdul Basit changed into the registered Reserve Goalkeeper's jersey, registered as Number 23 in the name of Ferdinand Sabi Acquah, who could not replace the injured Goalkeeper due to the exhausted limit of substitutions.

The Petitioner stated that the best thing WAFA should have done was to present the outfield player with a registered strip without number and not to use Jersey number 23.

The Petitioner further cited Article 20.2 of the GFA Premier League Regulations which states that:

“Before the start of any official game, the names of seven (7) officials and eleven (11) players, in addition to the seven (7) reserve players three (3) of whom may be called upon to play as substitutes, shall be registered on the match forms. In friendly matches, the number of substitutes shall be negotiated between the two teams. The Referee must be made aware of the number agreed upon before the start of the game.”

It is the case of the Petitioner that the Respondent breached Article 20(2) of the Ghana Premier League Regulations by making 4 substitutions instead of 3. The Petitioner claimed that the Respondent could have approved the said breach if the Respondent had respected Article 16(1)(c) by making sure the goalkeeper wore a jersey registered with the GFA and without a number. The Petitioner stated that the Respondent rather allowed Player Abdul Basit to wear the jersey of the reserve goalkeeper which had the number 23.

Petitioner argues that jersey number 23 had no business on the field of play since the WAFA FC had exhausted their substitutions and did not fill a substitution form. The Petitioner then adds that the presence of jersey number 23 on the field of play was illegal and renders the person in that jersey unqualified.

The Petitioner further cites Article 33(1)(j) of the GFA Premier League Regulations which states that:

“A team commits an offence punishable by forfeiture of a match where it fails to play in the strip that is determined by the GFA for that match”.

The Petitioner stresses on the importance of this Article and prays the Committee to declare WAFA as losers of the Matchday 22 match between the two sides played at the Golden City park. The Petitioner further prays the Committee to apply the sanctions stipulated in Article 33(1)(j) of the Ghana Premier League Regulations. The Petitioners attached still photos from the game where the outfield player changed into jersey number 23 and the jersey of the injured goalkeeper.

DEFENCE OF WAFA

In its Statement of Defence, the Respondent stated that when a club has exhausted its substitutions and its goalkeeper gets injured and unable to continue, an outfield player is allowed to replace him, as stipulated in Article 16(1)(c) of the GFA Premier League Regulations. The Respondent stated that it complied with the directives stated in Article 16(1)(c) of the GFA Premier League Regulations accordingly.

The Respondents further stated that WAFA cannot suffer forfeiture under Article 33(i) of the GFA Premier League Regulations because the jersey used by the outfield player in post for WAFA was registered with the GFA as the Club's Goalkeeper's strip. WAFA argues that none of the regulations on forfeiture was violated in the game and hence the protest be dismissed.

The Respondent describes the relief being sought by the Petitioner as a misapplication of the regulation which must be disregarded since it is not supported by any Article to firm up its application.

It is the case of the Respondent that the protest of Berekum Chelsea FC is frivolous, without merit and be dismissed with cost awarded against the Petitioner.

FINDINGS AND GROUNDS OF THE DECISION

The Petitioner stated that the Respondent should suffer forfeiture for violating Article 16(1)(c) and Article 20(2) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.

The said Article 16(1)(c) states that:

“Where there is a clash of colours in respect of the goalkeeper's strip and the outfield players' strip, the goalkeeper shall change to a reserve strip. Any clash occurring between the colour of the two goalkeepers' strips, the goalkeeper of the visiting team shall change his strip. In the event that an outfield player is replacing the goalkeeper, the outfield player shall appear in his team's registered goalkeeper's shirt without a number.”

Article 20.2 of the Ghana Premier League also states that:

“Before the start of any official game, the names of seven (7) officials and eleven (11) players, in addition to the seven (7) reserve players three (3) of whom may be called upon to play as substitutes, shall be registered on the match forms. In friendly matches, the number of substitutes shall be negotiated between the two teams. The Referee must be made aware of the number agreed upon before the start of the game.”

The Petitioner stated that violating the two regulations above, the Respondent should suffer forfeiture for breaching Article 33(1)(j) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.

It is the finding of this Committee that in the 85th minute, the goalkeeper of WAFA, Osei Kwadwo Bonsu (jersey 40) got injured and could not continue the game and was replaced by a field player by an outfield player Abdul Basit Issah (jersey 36) after temporal a stoppage time of four (4) minutes.

After watching a recording of the match, the Committee found that player Abdul Basit Issah (36) changed into the reserve goalkeeper's kit with jersey number (23) to keep the post after the injured player was stretched off the field of play.

This Committee finds that WAFA complied in the main with Article 16(1)(c) of the Premier League Regulations but failed to comply with the final part of the regulations. Specifically, WAFA failed to comply with the second part of the Article which states that *"in the event that an outfield player is replacing the goalkeeper, the outfield player shall appear in his team's registered goalkeeper's shirt without a number."*

The instructive phrase here in this case is *"without a number"*. WAFA clearly breached this Article as player Abdul Basit rather replaced the injured goalkeeper with jersey number (23) in contravention of the said Article.

However, the claim for WAFA to forfeit the match for this breach is not supported by the regulations and therefore cannot be granted as the player appeared in the registered goalkeepers strip designated and determined by the GFA for WAFA albeit in a different number.

It is very clear to this Committee that the appropriate punishment for a breach of Article 16(1)(c) of the Ghana Premier League Regulations is clearly stated in clause 2 of the same Article 16 thereof (Article 16(2) of the Premier League Regulations).

The said Article 16(2) of the Ghana Premier League Regulations which states that:

"Any club which contravenes clause 1(a), 1(b) and 1(c) of this Article shall be liable to a fine of One Thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢1,000.00)".

The Committee therefore finds that the breach does not warrant a forfeiture of the match as the appropriate punishment has been provided for in the Regulations. The Committee shall urge the GFA to sanction WAFA as stated in Article 16(2) of the Premier League Regulations, that is if the GFA has not sanctioned WAFA already. This is indeed a matter that has nothing to do with forfeiture at all.

The case of the Petitioner for forfeiture was founded on Article 33(1)(j) of the GFA Premier League Regulations which states that:

"A team commits an offence punishable by forfeiture of a match where it fails to play in the strip that is determined by the GFA for that match".

This Committee is very clear from the evident provided by the Petitioner themselves that the goalkeeper strip is determined by the GFA for the match. A correct strip was used by WAFA. The punishment for the number being on the back of the jersey is clearly punished by Article 16(2) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.

On the second allegation, the Committee finds that the claim that by Berekum Chelsea FC that by changing into the reserve goalkeeper's shirt, WAFA made four substitutions cannot hold, as in reality a new player was not introduced into the game after the three substitutions had been made.

In this regard, WAFA cannot be said to have breached Article 20(2) of the Ghana Premier League Regulations as alleged by the Petitioners. The video of the match was very clear to all at the made that WAFA only had three substitutions in the said match.

The Committee is worried that a club have taken the lenient posture of the Committee to embark on their "fishing" expeditions by filing protest when it was notoriously clear that WAFA made only three substitutions and a registered jersey was used.

DECISIONS

The Committee therefore makes the following decisions:

- 1. It is the holding of this Committee that Berekum Chelsea FC's Protest shall therefore fail on all grounds.**
- 2. That Berekum Chelsea FC is hereby fined an amount of Ten Thousand Ghana Cedis (GHc10,000.00) for bringing a frivolous protest to the Disciplinary Committee pursuant to Article 35(14) of the Premier League Regulations. The said amount is payable to the GFA within 14 days upon receipt of this Ruling, failing which Berekum Chelsea shall forfeit their subsequent matches after the said deadline.**
- 3. That should any party be dissatisfied with and/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 Premier League Regulations of the GFA}.**



**Osei Kwadwo Adow, Esq.
Chairman, Disciplinary Committee
Wednesday, May 26, 2021**