

Football Association Regulatory Commission

In the matter of a Claim of Wrongful Dismissal

lodged by Wolverhampton Wanderers FC on behalf of Dominic Iorfa

Reasons for Regulatory Commission Decision

9 August 2016

1. The Regulatory Commission members were Mr. Roger Burden (Chairman), Mr. Gareth Farrelly and Mr. Denis Smith
2. Mr. Paddy McCormack, FA Judicial Services Manager, acted as Secretary to the Regulatory Commission.
3. The dismissal in question took place in the English Football League Championship match between Rotherham United FC and Wolverhampton Wanderers FC on 6 August 2016.
4. Wolverhampton Wanderers FC made an application to The Football Association, in accordance with paragraph 5(a) of Section A of the Disciplinary Procedures in that the dismissal of the player was “wrongful” in that the Referee made an obvious error in dismissing the Player.
5. Mr. Alan Wiley, of the Referee Advisory Panel, outlined the application of the Laws of the Game which were relevant to the offence. In particular, Mr Wiley referred us to Law 12 where it deals with sending-off offences, one of which is denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by an offence punishable by a free kick.
6. Mr. Wiley covered the factors that the Referee should consider before dismissing a player for such an offence. They are –

Distance between the offence and the goal, general direction of play, location and number of other defenders and the likelihood of the attacker keeping, or gaining, control of the ball.

7. The Commission had the following evidence before it:
(The following is a summary of the principal evidence and submissions provided to the Commission. It does not purport to contain reference to all the points made, however the absence of a point, or submission, in these reasons should not imply that the Commission did not take such point, or submission, into consideration when the members determined the matter. For the avoidance of doubt, the Commission carefully considered all written and video evidence in respect of this case.)
- A report from Mr Scott Duncan, the Match Referee, in which he said that Mr Iorfa had pulled his opponent to prevent him having a clear run at goal and had denied an obvious goal scoring opportunity.
 - A letter from Mr Richard Skirrow, Club Secretary of Wolverhampton Wanderers FC, in which he suggested, inter alia, that, following an appeal for handball, both players involved changed direction and there was a really low level of contact.
Mr Skirrow said that paths crossed but that Mr Iorfa did not pull his opponent, that any contact was minimal and that no foul had been committed. He went on to say that no goal scoring opportunity had been denied because the opponent had been able to continue his run after the incident and the goal scoring opportunity was still “live”.
Mr Skirrow also suggested that a close up and other camera angles would have been of benefit.
 - A video of the incident, submitted by Wolverhampton Wanderers FC.
8. The video only provided one camera angle. In watching the video, we saw Mr Iorfa challenge for the ball. However, he failed to make contact with the ball and clearly impeded his opponent in what, all members agreed, amounted to a foul challenge. His opponent then regained his balance and continued his run towards the goal. We all agreed that this amounted to a foul challenge. We also felt that the Referee could have allowed play to continue in accordance with the advantage clause, which was part of Mr Skirrow’s contention. However, the only matter that concerned us was that we agreed that the

challenge was a foul and that all the factors within Law 12, outlined by Mr Wiley, were satisfied.

9. For the claim to be successful, the Club had to prove to us that the Referee had made an obvious error.
10. Having viewed the incident several times, it was clear to us, for the reasons outlined above, that the Referee had not made an obvious error.
11. We decided, therefore, to dismiss Wolverhampton Wanderers' claim and that Mr Iorfa should serve the appropriate ban for the offence.
12. This decision is final and binding.

Roger Burden

Chairman

9 August 2016.