



IN THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE GHANA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Protest Case: No. P -19 2024-25

PANEL

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BASAKE HOLY STARS FC vrs NATIONS FC & NATIONS FC vrs BASAKE HOLY STARS FC

PROTEST & CROSS-PROTEST IN RESPECT OF THE GHANA PREMIER LEAGUE MATCHDAY 33 MATCH PLAYED AT AMPAIN AAK SOCCER ARENA

CONSOLIDATION OF THE TWO PROTEST CASES

The two clubs, Basake Holy Stars and Nations FC protested against each other in relation to the same match (the Matchday 33 Ghana Premier League 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

In accordance with Article 56 of the GFA statutes (2019) and Articles 35(9) of the GFA Ghana Premier League Regulations, this Disciplinary Committee (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") considered

(a) the depositions from Basake Holy Stars FC (Petitioner) and Nations FC (Respondent) in respect of the Protest filed by Basake Holy Stars FC;

(b) the depositions of Nations FC (Cross-Petitioner) and Basake Holy Stars FC (the Cross-Respondent) in respect of Protest filed by Nations FC;

SUMMARY OF FACTS

A. PROTEST BY BASAKE FC

CASE OF BASAKE FC

The Petitioner filed a protest against the Respondent for causing the abrupt end of the Ghana Premier League Matchday 33 game between the two Clubs at the Ampain AAK II Arena contrary to Article 33(1)(a) and (b) of the Ghana Premier League Regulations.

It is the case of the Petitioner that the Respondent refused to continue play and walked off the field thereby causing an abrupt end of the match. According to the Petitioner, Basake Holy Stars FC was leading by a goal to nil and was awarded a penalty following which the goalkeeper's trainer and substitute goalkeeper of Nations FC attacked the referee and his assistant II. The Petitioner added that after the police calmed the situation, the players and officials of Nations FC walked off the field to their dressing room and subsequently to their team bus before leaving the stadium peacefully.

The Petitioner further stated that the Referees and the Match Commissioner waited on the field of play with the home team for more than 30 minutes before whistling to end the game. The Petitioner added that personnel of the Ghana Police Service, Fire Service, Ghana Red Cross and the National Ambulance were all at post till the referee whistled to end the game. The Petitioner attached videos of players and officials of Nations FC walking off the field of play.

The Petitioner therefore called on the GFA Disciplinary Committee to award Basake Holy Stars FC as winners of the match and award the Club 3 points and 3 goals accordingly. The Petitioner further asked the Disciplinary Committee to apply the necessary sanctions on the Respondent accordingly.

DEFENCE OF NATIONS FC

In its response to the protest case, Nations FC explained that kick off delayed due to several issues, including the number of security personnel present. The Respondent stated that its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) informed the Director of Competitions of the

GFA about the inadequate police presence at the venue. According to the Respondent, following directives by the Director of Competitions, a head count was conducted which revealed that there were only 17 officers on duty.

The Respondent added that the Match Commissioner assured them that more police officers would be deployed shortly and advised that the game should be allowed to commence. The Respondent claimed that subsequent to that, there were no additional security personnel at the venue as promised by the Match Commissioner.

It is the case of the Respondent that the situation significantly compromised the safety standards expected for a Premier League match. According to the Respondent, supporters who were not accredited entered the pitch and altercation ensued between these unaccredited supporters and some technical team members of the Respondent after the second penalty was awarded in favour of the home team as seen in the video attached by the Petitioner.

The Respondent insists that these happenings informed its decision to pull out of the game in order to protect its players and staff.

In an additional response, the Respondent mentioned that it had clear video evidence to support its claim that its supporters who had valid match tickets were denied entry into the stadium. According to the Respondent the agreed match ticket cost was GHc20, however upon arrival at the venue supporters of the Away team were told to pay GHc50 for the match tickets. The Respondent added that to avoid further altercations, the Chairman of the Club intervened and covered the difference for all supporters of the Away team.

The Respondent claims that shortly after its fans entered the stadium, they were forced out by a group of individuals believed to be “macho men”. The Respondent added that it has another footage which shows that its supporters felt unsafe and that the police presence at the venue was inadequate to ensure their protection. According to the Respondent, its supporters proceeded to the local police station to lodge a formal complaint but the police officer refused to take their statement.

They further narrated that while not all events were captured on video, the videos available and firsthand accounts from its supporters clearly indicate a failure in the basic matchday safety obligations. The Respondent again concluded that these circumstances created an unsafe and hostile environment and that its decision to withdraw was not an act of misconduct but a necessary and responsible step in line with the principles of player and supporter safety enshrined in the regulations of the GFA, CAF and FIFA.

Further explanations by the Respondent stated that the video footage presented by the Petitioner clearly shows fans of the home team running onto the pitch in what appeared to be an attempt to attack players and the goalkeeper's trainer of the Respondent. According to the Respondent, this happened after its reserve goalkeeper Kofi Mensah in the heat of the moment, stepped onto the field to seek clarification from the referee regarding the decision to award a penalty to the home team.

The Respondent claims that in that moment, the assistant referee had already raised his flag for offside before the player of the home team even took the shot which deflected off the hand of the defender of the away team. The Respondent further claims that the referee proceeded to ignore it and instead awarded a penalty to the home team.

In its response, the Respondent stated that the video footage shows that the referee approached his assistant to enquire about the offside call which confirms that there was uncertainty surrounding the decision.

B. CROSS PROTEST BY NATIONS FC

CASE OF NATIONS FC

The Cross-Petitioner wrote to officially lodge a protest for gross violations of the GFA's Enhanced Matchday Safety and Security Protocols (Feb. 2025).

The Cross-Petitioner listed the breaches as follows:

- i. That its President, Divine Kyei and Chairman, Dr. Kwame Kyei were physically assaulted by home team supporters – a direct violation of Article 9(b) of the

- Safety Protocols, which mandates host clubs to ensure the safety of visiting teams and officials.
- ii. That despite prior agreement and standard expectations, less than 20 security personnel were present instead of the required number of 70 security personnel. The Cross-Petitioner argued that this contravenes Article 9(d) and Appendix 1, which outlines minimum deployment and planning requirements.
 - iii. That the GFA Accredited videographer was obstructed by supporters and officials of the home team, in violation of Article 7(d), which guarantees access for accredited persons.
 - iv. That supporters of the Club who were holding valid tickets were denied entry, violating Article 9(c) (i-iii), which requires dedicated access and buffer zones for away fans.
 - v. That Club property including communication equipment were destroyed and the phone of the President stolen. The Cross-Petitioner insists that these acts highlight a breakdown in security management as outlined in Articles 6(c), 10(g) and 9(b).

It is therefore the case of the Cross-Petitioner that the GFA initiates an immediate investigation into the security lapses and sanction Basake Holy Stars in line with the applicable fines and venue bans. The Cross-Petitioner also called on the GFA to reschedule the match to a neutral venue, behind closed doors and compensate Nations FC for the damaged equipment as well as the stolen property through the appropriate channels.

DEFENCE TO PROTEST BY BASAKE HOLY STARS FC

The Cross-Respondent stated that the Cross-Petitioner failed to file its protest on the appropriate form as enshrined in Article 35(7) (a) of the GFA Premier League Regulations. The Cross-Respondent added that the Cross-Petitioner failed to state with details the mode of payment of the required protest fees as stated in Article 35(5) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.

On the substantive matter, the Cross-Respondent reiterated that it collaborated with the Ghana Police Service to provide security at the match venue. According to the Cross-

Respondent, as at 1:45pm, there were a total of 70 security personnel positioned at various vantage points at the stadium.

It is the case of the Cross-Respondent that after the referee awarded a second penalty to the home team, the Away team decided to discontinue play and walked off the field, went into the dressing room and left the stadium. The Cross-Respondent added that the Referee and other match officials waited on the field of play for about 30 minutes with the home team before blowing the whistle to end the game.

FINDINGS AND GROUNDS OF THE DECISION

It is very clear from the foregoing that the two protests are the opposite of each other in terms of the contents of the Statement of Case and the Statement of Defence vice versa in both protests.

This Committee finds as follows from the match reports and the video of the match:

REFEREES REPORT

The Referee in his report stated that the match started at 3:30pm as a result of the adequate security presence, the away team refused to come out from their dressing room as well as complaints that supporters of the away team were not being allowed into the stadium. In his report, the Referee stated that in the 37th minute of the match, a penalty was awarded to the Home team following which players of the Away team started attacking the referee and his assistant II. The Referee further stated that the technical team and substitutes of the away team invaded the field of play and Goalkeeper for the Away team (Rabin Ousmane Sanon) manhandled the Assistant II.

The Referee stated that the match came to a temporal stoppage for about 10 minutes before the away team left the field of play and the match ended abruptly.

MATCH COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

On the behavior of teams, the Match Commissioner (MC) stated that the home team conducted themselves professionally before, during, and until the match was abandoned.

The MC added that at the time the game ended abruptly, the home team remained on the field till the referee signaled for the match to end.

On the other hand, the MC stated that, the players and technical team of Nations FC, excluding the head coach, Mr. Ocansey Mingle Kassim, repeatedly challenged the decisions of the officiating officials throughout the game.

The MC further referred to a 26th minute incident where the technical team and substitutes of the Away team aggressively reacted to a decision by the Assistant Referee One to flag for an offside against Nations FC, a conduct the MC described as inappropriate.

The MC further asserted that following the award of a penalty against Nations FC, the entire technical bench and several substitutes invaded the pitch, heckling the referee and Assistant Referee Two. The MC then stated that this incident led to the abrupt halt of the match.

On the behavior of supporters, the MC stated that supporters of the home team were hostile to the away team's supporters and officials. The Match Commissioner also stated that supporters of the home team attempted to prevent valid ticket holders from entering the stadium and obstructed the Nations FC cameraman from filming the match, despite prior agreement during the technical meeting. .

According to the MC, supporters of the home team also forcibly relocated the away team's management officials from the VIP stand to an area near the right corner flag and had a physical altercation with one Nations FC official, Divine Kyei. The MC described the conduct of supporters of Nations FC as respectful after being allowed entry into the stadium. The MC emphasized that all issues concerning spectators were resolved before kickoff at 3:30 p.m.

On the incidents that resulted in the abrupt end, the MC stated that after a handball incident which resulted in a penalty, player No. 17 Sadiq Alhassan was cautioned for verbally abusing the referee. After that, the MC added that player No. 99, Rabin Ousmane Sanon, physically confronted Assistant Referee 2 by grabbing his shirt.

Subsequently the MC said that the technical team and substitutes of the away team invaded the pitch and attacked match officials and police personnel. The MC added that the Away team's Reserve goalkeeper No. 41, Kofi Mensah, was handcuffed by the police and later released after he removed his gear and charged on the match officials without provocation. The MC further affirmed that Kofi Mensah and Player No. 33, Emmanuel Annor, who had earlier verbally assaulted the Match Commissioner, damaged parts of the tunnel and gate on their way to the dressing room.

In his conclusion, the MC emphasized that the game was halted for 11 minutes following which the Away team retreated to the dressing room and subsequently left the match venue without notifying the Match Commissioner and other match officials.

CONSIDERATION OF THE FINDINGS

This matter raises the issue of forfeiture for a violation of Article 33(1)(b) of the GFA Premier 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 Committee finds that by invading the pitch on the 37th minute, the technical team and substitutes of Nations FC **initiated the acts** that led to the abrupt end of the match.

From the Report of the Match Officials, the Committee found that the actions of the players and technical staff of Nations FC lead to a halt of the game for about 11 minutes before Nations FC retreated to the dressing room. Also, the decision by Nations FC to exit the stadium made it impossible to continue the game under any circumstances.

That this Committee finds that the assertion by Nations FC that it decided not to continue the match due to inadequate presence of security personnel as untenable and not

supported by videos which were submitted by both parties. The video recording shows members of the technical team and substitute players of Nations FC especially Reserve goalkeeper Kofi Mensah who charged onto the pitch and attacked the match officials as well as police who were trying to calm the situation. This conduct by the technical team and substitute players of Nations FC is considered as unsporting and a violation of the regulations.

Nations 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, the official(s) or the player(s) or the supporter(s) who **initiates the act responsible** for the abrupt end of the match.

Article 35(7) (a) of the GFA Premier League Regulations is clear that:

All protests shall be filed on appropriate forms to be provided free of charge by the GFA.

Contrary this article, Nations FC filed its protest on the Club's letterhead and not on the GFA approved protest form which is known to all Clubs including Nations FC. The supposed protest of Nations FC is therefore struck out because it was not filed in accordance with the Regulations.

Therefore, in the instant circumstances, it is the position of the Committee that the conduct of the technical team, substitute players and the decision by Nations FC to leave the match venue, led to the abrupt end of the match.

DECISIONS

The Committee therefore makes the following decisions:

- 1. That the Protest of Basake Holy Stars FC shall succeed.**
- 2. That the Protest of Nations FC is dismissed.**

3. That, Nations FC initiated the acts that led to the abrupt end of the match, Nations FC shall forfeit the match in accordance with Article 33(1)(b) of the GFA Premier League Regulations.
4. That having forfeited the match, Nations 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 Basake Holy Stars FC.
5. That in addition, being the defaulting club, Nations 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.
6. That in addition, being the defaulting club, Nations FC is hereby fined Two Thousand and Five Hundred Ghana Cedis (GHc2,500.00) payable to the GFA, 50% of which shall be paid to Basake Holy Stars FC pursuant to Article 33(5)(b) of the Premier League Regulations.
7. That the GFA Prosecutor shall investigate the reports of the Match Officials and charge all persons found culpable.
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.



Osei Kwadwo Adow, Esq.
Chairman, Disciplinary Committee
Tuesday, June 10, 2025