

IN THE MATTER OF AN IFA APPEALS COMMITTEE

Between

WOODVALE FOOTBALL CLUB

Appellant

-v-

NAFL

Respondent

APPEALS COMMITTEE

Rachel Best KC (Chair)

David Lennox

Rodney McVitty

On behalf of the Appellant, Richard McLean (Barrister), Johnny Kelly and David McKeown

On behalf of the Respondent, Stephen Carlisle, Paul Causby, David McCartney

DECISION BEING APPEALED

1. This Committee is given jurisdiction to consider certain appeals by virtue of *Article 14 of the Articles of Association*. Any appeal must come within this Article.
2. At the outset of the Appeal, it was confirmed with the representatives from the Appellant, that the decision they were appealing was that which was made on or about the 24th July 2025 and communicated to the Appellant via email on the 25th

July 2025. Indeed, this is the basis of the appeal document grounding the Appeal before this Appeals Board.

3. The decision being appealed, as set out in the Appellant's Submissions, was identified as follows: *"25/07/25 The NAFL wrote to Woodvale FC indicating that Shamrock had been promoted. From this it is possible to infer that no response to the 04/06/25 query will ever be forthcoming."*

FACTS AND BACKGROUND

4. On 22nd July 2025 the IFA Appeals Committee issued a decision in the case of *Shamrock Football Club v NAFL*. This decision came on the back of an earlier decision in the case of *Woodvale v NAFL* (hereinafter referred to as the *First Woodvale* decision). In the *Shamrock* decision, the Appeals Committee concluded that in applying the outcome of the *First Woodvale* decision and the precedent set in the case of *Queen's Grads v NAFL*, the furthest the Respondent could have gone in terms of applying a consistent approach was to alter the points awarded to the opponents of the Clubs who played the ineligible player i.e. the opponents of *Suffolk FC*. Whether by conducting that exercise or only awarding the three points to *Woodvale*, the Appellant would still remain in second place in Section 1C thereby being promoted to Section 1B in accordance with bye-law 5.1.3 for the 2025/26 season (see para 18 of the *Shamrock* decision).
5. The *First Woodvale* decision related to an earlier decision of the Appeals Committee whereby *Woodvale* had appealed a decision of NAFL not to award points to any team who had played against Suffolk FC who had played, Player A, "the ineligible player" during the 2024/2025 season. The Appeals Board, on the facts of that case determined that the Respondent had erred in law in failing to follow its own

decisions in respect of the consequences of breaches of bye-law B2.1 and had failed in a number of other regards (see para 14).

6. The *Shamrock* decision was a decision taken by a separate Appeals Board, which having considered the matter upheld the appeal of Shamrock Football Club, thereby meaning Shamrock were promoted.
7. As was discussed in the context of this Hearing before the Appeals Board, it was accepted that the Appeals Committee is not the proper forum to appeal the *Shamrock* decision. Indeed, it was specifically, and correctly, advanced by the Appellant's representatives that the Shamrock decision should not be set aside following the *First Woodvale* decision.
8. The Appeals Committee agrees with the Appellant that it does not have the power to set aside or deal with an appeal to the Shamrock Football Club decision; other procedures may be applicable in that regard.
9. The Appeal before this Board is the decision of the 25th July 2025, as identified by the Appellant, where NAFL wrote to Woodvale indicating that Shamrock had been promoted. In that regard it is considered by the Appeals Committee that it should look at the written *Shamrock* decision in determining whether NAFL have implemented it correctly.
10. From what is advanced before the Appeals Board, the Board considers that the League did interpret the *Shamrock* decision correctly and has implemented it accordingly.

11. The Appeals Committee at this point wishes to recognise the hard work of the League in implementing the decisions of the Appeals Committee. This is not an easy feat, and it is recognised that the League are trying their best to ensure that sporting integrity is at the heart of football. The Appeals Committee wishes to commend those who are involved in NAFL for their ongoing hard work in sorting out these issues.
12. The Appeals Committee continues to encourage matters to be dealt with promptly and as expeditiously as possible and considers that where any team or league become aware of an ineligible player being played this must be dealt with as soon as practicable and not left until the end of the season where issues such as in this case can therefore arise.
13. Considering all the arguments and facts advanced before the Appeals Board, the Appeal is dismissed.

R BEST KC

D LENNOX

R McVITTY

29.08.25