

IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

APPEALS COMMITTEE

In the matter of an appeal taken by (“the Appellant”) against a decision taken by the (“the Respondent”)

Appeals Board

James Tracey (Chair)

David Lennox

Mervyn Wheatley

Shamrock FC (Appellant)

David Begley

Gerard Foster

NAFL (Respondent)

David Morrow

Paul Causby

David McCarthy

Decision

This is the unanimous decision of the IFA Appeals Committee which was reached following a hearing on Tuesday 16 June 2026. The Panel considered a significant volume of material and written submissions in addition to hearing from representatives from Shamrock FC and the NAFL. The Appeals Committee are grateful to both parties for their comprehensive and detailed submissions, both orally and in writing.

For the reasons set out below, the Appellant’s appeal is rejected.

Issue

1. This appeal was brought by Shamrock FC against the decision of NAFL on the 13 May 2026 arising from the fielding of an eligible player on 5 occasions between 27 September 2025 and 1 November 2025. NAFL confirmed that the 5 matches in which the ineligible player was fielded, were to be recorded as 3-0 defeats, points forfeit, and a £100 fine imposed.
2. The appellant noted that the ineligibility of the player in question was not raised with the Respondent until 4 May 2026.
3. The specific alleged breaches of the Northern Amateur Football Bye Laws are as follows:-

Bye-Law B 2.1 which states *any team playing an ineligible player or players whether through non-registration, noncompliance with Player Listing Instructions or otherwise) shall be fined £100.00 for each ineligible player played and shall forfeit any points won in all matches in which the player(s) played. In all matches in which teams forfeit points won as a result of playing an ineligible player, the match opponents will be awarded a 3-0 victory, unless the score registered in the match was greater than 3-0 to the match opponents.*

Bye-Law A 14.1 – Which states *Save where NAFL has decided to act pursuant to Article 11 of the Articles of Association of NAFL, the appropriate NAFL Committee shall have power to deal with offending Club or Clubs, player or players, official or officials, as they may deem fit, and to deal with any matters not provided for in these Bye-Laws, and matters also noted in the attached Appendices.*

4. The Appellant's appeal is grounded on the basis of **Bye-Law B 2.2** which states *Protests under this rule giving particulars of protests, must be despatched to the League Secretary bearing postmark within five days from date of match, and forwarding by Bank Transfer within 2 days a deposit of £100.00, which shall be forfeited in the event of the protest not being sustained.*
5. The appellant is therefore seeking that the appeal be accepted on the basis that the time period passed between the matches played by the ineligible player, and the date in which the complaint was made to the NAFL, exceeded the five day time period stipulated by Bye-Law B 2.2

Relevant findings of fact

6. It is accepted by the appellant that the player fielded was ineligible. In their appeal, the appellant specifically stated *'to be clear, we are not appealing the determination that the player was ineligible'*
7. It is also clear, that the dates in which the illegible player was fielded are as follows: -
 - 27 September 2025
 - 04 October 2025
 - 18 October 2025
 - 25 October 2025
 - 01 November 2025

Findings

8. It isn't disputed that the appellant fielded an ineligible player for 5 matches between 27 September 2025 and 01 November 2025, and that a complaint regarding this players status was not made to NAFL until 04 May 2026.
9. NAFL have imposed a £100.00 fine and had the five matches in question recorded as 3-0 losses, with points forfeit, as per Bye-Law B 2.1.

10. This gives rise to the question of whether Bye-Law B 2.1 and B 2.2 are to be considered mutually inclusive, insofar as, if NAFL seek to rely on the powers of Bye-law B 2.1, then Bye-Law 2.2 must also be applied.
11. It is determined that both Bye-Law B 2.1 and Bye-Law B 2.2 **do not** have to be applied concurrently, and that Bye-Law A 14.1 extends the powers of NAFL to deal with offending Club or Clubs, player or players, official or officials, as they may deem fit, and to deal with any matters not provided for in the Bye-Laws. Furthermore, if the panel accepted that Bye-Law 2.2 was applicable, it would lead to a situation where the appellant would escape any penalty for the fielding of an ineligible player.
12. On this basis, the appeal is rejected.

James Tracey (Chair)
David Lennox
Mervyn Wheatley