

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPEAL BOARD OF THE FOOTBALL
ASSOCIATION

BETWEEN

LONG EATON FC

Appellant

and

THE FA ALLIANCE COMMITTEE

Respondent

DECISION AND WRITTEN REASONS OF THE APPEAL BOARD

1. The Appeal Board conducted a hearing on Thursday, 9 June 2022, to determine an appeal by the Appellant against a decision of the Respondent, dated 12 May 2022.
2. This hearing was conducted by Microsoft Teams (video-conferencing).
3. The Appeal Board consisted of Mr Tony Rock (Chairperson), Mr Robert Purkiss MBE, and Mr Keith Allen.
4. Mr Michael O'Connor, the Lead Judicial Services Officer, acted as Secretary to the Appeal Board.
5. The Appellant was represented by Mr Nick Dargan. Mr Jim Fairley attended as an observer.
6. The Respondent was represented by Mr Mark Ives. Mr Matt Edkins and Mr James Earl attended as observers.

The Hearing

7. The Respondent, on 12 May 2022, allocated the Appellant to the Northern Premier League East Division following their promotion.
8. The Appeal Board noted that the Appellant was appealing on the following grounds:

- a. Came to a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come.
 - b. Imposed a penalty, award, order or sanction that was excessive.
9. The Appeal Board thank both parties for the manner in which they made their submissions.
10. The Appeal Board, having taken into account the submissions of the parties and having given the Appeal Bundle careful consideration, dismissed the appeal on both grounds.
11. The following is a summary of the primary considerations of the Appeal Board. The absence in these reasons of any particular point, or submission, should not imply that the Appeal Board did not take such point, or submission, into consideration when it considered the matter and reached its findings.
 - a. The Appellant's primary submission was that the Club in essence is a Midlands Club and placement in the Northern Premier League East Division would be detrimental to the Club's existence and 5-year Business Plan. The Club had made a reasonable assumption that they would be placed in the Midlands Division.
 - b. The Appellant submitted that the move would lead to a substantial increase in travel time and costs; 1200 miles last season, increasing to 3500 miles in season 2022/23. They will lose a number of local derbies, interest will wain and they will lose commercial revenue. Their opponents in the North East don't want them in their league due to the subsequent increase in their own travel time.
 - c. The Club highlighted that, within the National League System (NLS), there is precedent for leagues with more and sometimes less than 20 clubs.
 - d. The Respondent submitted that at the level of the game the Appellant plays at it is important for the same number of teams to be in a league to prevent weeks where teams are 'idle'. It is also important to maintain the sporting integrity of the pyramid, with equal chance of promotion and relegation.

- e. The Respondent submitted that, when determining lateral movement or clubs being placed on promotion, the NLS cannot take into consideration the geography of where the players are being drawn from.
 - f. The Respondent submitted the decision of the Alliance Committee was in line with its regulations and is not excessive, unfair or unreasonable.
12. The Appeal Board considered the matter of costs and decided that there would be no order as to costs.
13. The Appeal Board order that the appeal fee be forfeited.
14. The Appeal Board's decision is final and binding.

Tony Rock
Keith Allen
Robert Purkiss MBE

10 June 2022