

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPEAL BOARD OF THE FOOTBALL
ASSOCIATION

BETWEEN

OUGHTIBRIDGE WAR MEMORIAL WOMEN FC

Appellant

and

THE FA WOMEN'S FOOTBALL PYRAMID PROJECT TEAM

Respondent

DECISION AND WRITTEN REASONS OF THE APPEAL BOARD

1. The Appeal Board conducted a hearing on Tuesday, 25 June 2024, to determine an appeal by the Appellant against a decision of the Respondent, dated 4 June 2024.
2. This hearing was conducted as a Correspondence Hearing.
3. The Appeal Board consisted of Mr Paul Tompkins (Chairperson), Mr Robert Purkiss MBE, and Mr Daniel Mole. Mr Nathan Greenslade, the Judicial Services Administrator, acted as Secretary to the Appeal Board.

The Hearing

4. The Respondent, on 4 June 2024, notified the Appellant of their decision that the Appellant was to be laterally moved from the East Midlands Women's Regional League Division 1 North to the North East Women's Regional League Division 1 South for the 2024/25 season.
5. The Appeal Board, having taken into account the submissions of the parties careful consideration, noted the following.
6. The Appeal Board thanks both parties for the manner in which they made their submissions.

7. The Appeal Board noted that the Appellant was appealing on the following ground:
 - a. Came to a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come.
8. The Appeal Board unanimously dismissed the appeal on this ground.
9. The Appeal Board reached this decision considering the following:
 - a. The following is a summary of the primary considerations of the Appeal Board, however 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.
 - b. On considering the single ground of appeal that the Respondent had come to a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come, the Appeal Board took careful consideration of the Appellant's geographical location, likely mileage to be travelled in the forthcoming season, and the availability of an alternative solution proposed by the Appellant. The Appeal Board reminded itself that it is unable to impose its own preferred solution in such cases and is only empowered by the FA Appeal Regulations to review the original decision of the Respondent. This ground for appeal only allows the Appeal Board to intervene when it considers the Respondent has come to a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come.
 - c. When looking at league allocations objectively, the Appellant finds itself in a location where it is a club close to the border of two possible leagues and the Respondent must exercise objective discernment when placing a club, considering not only the club in question but also other clubs affected by the allocation and the travelling required by all clubs in a particular division. Placing the Appellant club in the North East Women's Regional League Division 1 South was not perverse, irrational or wrong. To do otherwise would have overridden the principle of objectivity and fairness when applying the Regulations and would have

risked preferring the Appellant's case over other clubs in a similar position.

- d. The Respondent had to consider the integrity of the FA Women's Football Pyramid and therefore the Appeal Board is unable to find that that the allocation of the Appellant to North East Women's Regional League Division 1 South for season 2024-25 is a decision to which no reasonable such body could have come.

10. The Appeal Board considered the matter of costs and decided that there would be no order as to costs.

11. The Appeal Board order that the appeal fee be forfeited.

12. The Appeal Board's decision is final and binding.

Paul Tompkins

Daniel Mole

Robert Purkiss MBE

25 June 2024