

## **MALTA BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION COUNCIL – DECISION**

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2022**

The Council of the Malta Basketball Association (MBA) has concluded its inquiry into the BOV Men's Senior National League match between Depiro Basketball Club and Hibernians Basketball Club, played on Saturday, 26th March, 2022 at the MBA Complex, Ta' Qali.

The Council launched an urgent inquiry after receiving a written report from the MBA Secretary General about allegations of inappropriate and unsporting behaviour by Hibernians BC and Depiro BC wherein both teams purportedly showed no motivation to play to the best of their abilities in pursuit of victory in the closing minutes of their league match. Their actions led to a situation where, among other things, the score remained unchanged in the last six minutes of the game.

During two hearings, held over the past few days, the members of the MBA Council analysed the video footage of the match, especially the closing minutes, and heard the testimonies given by committee members, coaches and the captains of the teams involved.

After reviewing the documentation and video evidence presented before the MBA Council, as well as hearing the statements made by the coaches, team captains and club committee officials, it was unanimously agreed that the game lost its integrity in the fourth quarter from the fourth-minute mark. The MBA Council ruled that both teams, their coaches and the players on court for the last six minutes of the match, have brought the game into serious disrepute through their inappropriate and unsporting behaviour.

Notwithstanding, the MBA Council expresses its utter dismay and condemnation of the approach adopted by the players and coaches of both teams which not only goes against the spirit of basketball but tarnishes the integrity and image of the game, setting a very bad example for all the players, especially the youngsters involved in the said match, and the whole Maltese basketball community and Sport in general.

In view of the above, the MBA Council, in accordance with the Association's Disciplinary Code which empowers it to 'decide upon all acts committed which are in breach of any of

the rules laid out by the MBA, and that the MBA Council shall have the power to impose penalties against the party found guilty', has reached the following conclusions:

- The teams failed to maintain the standard and integrity expected by the MBA Council at the conclusion of the game. For their actions in bringing Maltese basketball, and the game, into disrepute;
- The game in question is declared null and void.
- Hibernians BC and Depiro BC shall be suspended from this season's Men's National League Play-Offs
- Both Teams shall also incur a three-point deduction commencing the next season the club fields a Men's Senior Division team.
- The MBA Council has found fault in the respective clubs' inaction by failing to reprimand and request their coaches to alter their strategy for the final minutes of the fourth quarter of the game. For their inaction, the MBA Council fines each team a total of two thousand five hundred euros (€2,500) which fine is to be paid within 30 calendar days from the date of the penalty being published by the MBA Council.
- The coaches – James Bamfield, of Depiro BC and Mario Tabone, of Hibernians BC, failed to uphold the integrity of the sport, and as a result of their actions, brought the game of Maltese basketball into disrepute not only locally but also across several international media platforms. Subsequently, the MBA Council suspends each respective coach for the remainder of season 2021/2022, and the full season of 2022/2023 from all MBA activities.
- The players also failed, to continue playing at the standard expected for a basketball game for the final minutes of the fourth quarter. In view of this failure, the MBA Council shall suspend players, over the legal age of eighteen (18), who were on court during the final minutes of the fourth quarter, for three successive games, which suspension is over and above the sanction barring both teams from this season's league play-offs. The players suspended for three games are:

<b>Hibernians</b>	<b>Depiro BC</b>
Nr. 1 – N. Cassar	Nr. 3 – S. Galea
Nr. 7 – L. Farrugia	Nr. 6 – J. Micallef
Nr. 10 – K. Dimech	Nr. 80 – L. Vella
Nr. 11 – A. Axiaq	
Nr. 77 – P. Shoults	

- Any other players, who had not yet attained the legal age of eighteen (18), shall be exempt from the afore-mentioned suspension, given that the coach is responsible for such minors. However, the MBA Council still determines that these players are to be severely reprimanded for their actions in the final minutes of the game. Moreover, if the players are reprimanded for a subsequent failing, they shall also be suspended for three (3) successive games. The reprimand shall remain applicable for two (2) calendar years from the date of the game. The players reprimanded for two (2) calendar years are:

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<b>Hibernians</b>	<b>Depiro BC</b>
	Nr. 7 – L. Attard
	Nr. 18 – S. Kennelly

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The MBA Council reserves the right to take further action, should any further facts come to light.

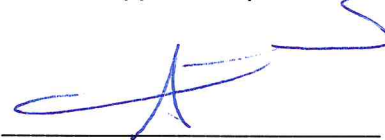
The MBA Council reiterates its zero-tolerance stance against any actions or attempts that undermine the integrity of the game at all levels.

The MBA Council decision dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 is hereunder approved by the members as follows:



Mr Paul Sultana

President



Mr Joseph Muscat

Secretary General



Mr Melvin Gauci

Financial Controller



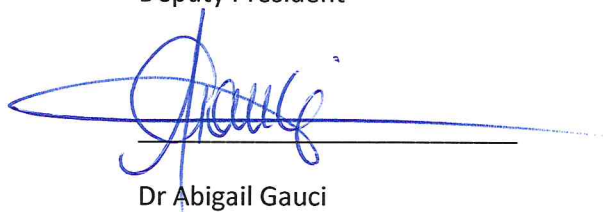
Mr Alex Farrugia

Deputy President



Mr Bernard Vassallo

Director



Dr Abigail Gauci

Director



Mr Elton Sant

Director