

Spartans ejected from Lowland League Cup after oversight



Spartans have been ejected from the Lowland League Cup after naming an ineligible player in their squad for Saturday's 4-0 quarter-final victory over Preston Athletic.

Goalkeeping coach Mark Cairns was on the bench for the game, an oversight which has cost the club dearly.

Following the news, Spartans manager Dougie Samuel issued a statement on the club website: "I feel for everyone connected with our Club this morning. A genuine oversight and error on my part has cost us our Lowland League Cup place. After defeating Edinburgh City, WWFC, BSC and Preston Athletic in the competition hopes were high that we could win the competition.

"On Saturday past, it was my call to put Mark Cairns on the bench. Since we allowed Murray Jackson to move to Musselburgh Athletic on loan, the g/k situation has been a real challenge (due to injuries to Kevin & Ross). Where we too nice as a Club in letting Muzza go, probably. However, he is looking forward to a Scottish Junior Cup Final because we did (we also let Ross Gilpin go out on loan to Preston when they needed our help...it's a touch ironic a goalkeeping clerical error should come in a game vs. Preston).

"When Kevin Swain turned up on Saturday with an eye patch on, he would have happily 'sat' on the bench, however, I wasn't happy with such a situation and asked Craig to include Mark Cairns instead, our G/K Coach. Throughout these past 7/8 years Cairnsy has worked with me, he's been a signed player at EUAFC & Spartans (there to provide 999 cover). He's sat on the bench for some league games earlier this season. I assumed he had

signed at the start of the current season, as we now know he hadn't. The buck stops with me, something I'm happy to accept.

"Sadly the disciplinary panel felt the need to 'expel' us from LL League Cup last night. It's the second committee decision to go against us in recent months, the other being to reject our request to re-schedule our game vs. Vale of Leithen in the South Challenge Cup to help us prepare to the best of our ability for our Scottish Cup replay vs. Berwick Rangers. In both cases, the option to take a different route could have been taken. Take last Saturday, had we included or played a person who had not been attached to the Club for a number of seasons it would be easy to point the finger and say we sought to obtain an unfair advantage...we didn't.

"Our error could have been picked up by several people (including me) before a ball was kicked, but it was missed. We didn't get lucky as they say, however, we're human and made a genuine mistake. In a strange way, part of me sort of thinks it's an apt end to the strangest time I've ever known in my football career. A lack of regular games is a nightmare, a lack of meaningful games a killer. I've learnt so much from this past season, have banked so many learns, Cairns-gate' being the last.

"As a Club we'll lick our wounds and move on. There are lots of positives, good things happening in our Club. For example, just last weekend our U16s won the Scottish Cup, a wonderful achievement, whilst our U20s continue to set the benchmark for their league and our East of Scotland Team have the King Cup final to look forward too. We're down today, however, a sense of perspective remains. If anything, the last 24 hours have merely served to fuel our collective desire to 'reclaim the crown' next season."