

Arbitration victory for Hearts would compromise sporting integrity of SPFL say Dundee United

Dundee United have warned that victory for Hearts and Partick Thistle in their forthcoming arbitration process would 'compromise the sporting integrity of the SPFL' could have 'have serious ramifications for the whole of Scottish football'

The club also revealed that along with Raith Rovers and Cove Rangers they considered withdrawing from the arbitration process and allowing the expert panel of arbiters to judge the case raised by Heart of Midlothian and Partick Thistle without any submissions from us in defence due to potential legal costs.

Instead United have asked other clubs to help and intend running a crowdfunding campaign to raise the necessary funds.



Photo: Ian Jacobs

A statement on the club's website reads: "On the day that the SPFL have released the Premiership fixture list for 2020/21, which is scheduled to start on 1st August, instead of looking forward and planning for the forthcoming season, the executive team and Board at the Club are embroiled in preparation work for the SFA arbitration process that starts this week in respect of the action raised by Heart of Midlothian and

Partick Thistle.

“As confirmed in our joint statement on Friday, we, along with Raith Rovers and Cove Rangers, were pleased with Lord Clark’s decision to refer the dispute to arbitration, however we remain incensed that we are having to devote considerable time and incur significant legal costs in defending this action. Together we have already incurred costs of over £50,000, and face further legal fees for the arbitration process that could take the total bill to over £150,000.

“Given the serious financial implications of these escalating legal costs for Raith Rovers, Cove Rangers and ourselves, the three clubs have considered withdrawing from the arbitration process and allowing the expert panel of arbiters to judge the case raised by Heart of Midlothian and Partick Thistle without any submissions from us in defence of our case. However, we believe (and our external legal advisors have confirmed same) that there is too much at stake to not defend our position against the Heart of Midlothian and Partick Thistle petition, which is seeking to reverse a decision that was made by 81% of the SPFL member clubs.

“If successful in their action, in our opinion Heart of Midlothian and Partick Thistle would compromise the sporting integrity of the SPFL with clubs having been declared champions of their league not being promoted. Having won the Championship by a considerable margin, and invested substantial sums of money in preparing for next season in the Premiership, a decision to overturn the SPFL resolution that was supported by 34 of the 42 member clubs would be ruinous for us and our fans.

“Heart of Midlothian and Partick Thistle could also be awarded significant sums in terms of compensation. Their compensation claim is for a total of £10 million. For the SPFL and its member clubs this would have potentially catastrophic consequences, with any compensation payment made to Heart of

Midlothian and Partick Thistle being paid directly out of SPFL funds that are distributed to all clubs each season as prize money.

“It is with these factors in mind, that, along with Raith Rovers and Cove Rangers, we are reaching out to our fellow member clubs for support in defending this action, which has not only potentially grave consequences for us, but every SPFL club. We also intend running a crowdfunding campaign to raise money to help fund the huge legal bills that we face. We hope that as well as our own supporters, fans of clubs across Scotland will see this as a worthy cause to get behind in that if Heart of Midlothian and Partick Thistle are successful in their action it could have serious ramifications for the whole of Scottish football.”