

September 26, 2011

ChangeFIFA's Statement Regarding The FIFA Ethics Committee's 26-Month Ban Of Mr. Colin Klass

The alleged conduct of Mr. Colin Klass at the CFU meeting in Trinidad on May 10, if true, is wholly unacceptable. Sadly, because of FIFA's deceit, lack of transparency, poorly veiled bias and lack of accountability to anyone, it is hard to know what is true regarding Mr. Klass' 26-month ban from football by the FIFA Ethics Committee. It is surprising that any serious impropriety would be met by FIFA with anything less than a lifetime ban from football. However, what we have learned over time is that FIFA has a high tolerance for impropriety and only seriously abhors and punishes challenges to its autocratic, never-ending leadership.

In a cynical effort to avoid neutral courts and independent oversight, FIFA continues to masquerade the Ethics Committee as some kind of impartial, pseudo-judicial body. A mere cursory examination of the FIFA Ethics Committee record – double standards of justice (i.e. Bin Hammam v. Blazer); uneven methods of investigation (i.e. mere sending a letter v. hiring the Freeh Group); resignation of respected real-world judicial officials who characterize it as having 'no real interest' in addressing corruption (i.e. Hirsch); nepotistic appointment of members; members with conflicts of interest; lack of independence; and incomplete and absurd Ethics Rules (i.e. arguably bans FIFA officials from accepting bribes but not giving them) – reveals that nothing could be farther from the truth. Further, the effort by FIFA to avoid impartial courts and justice is far from subtle, as Mr. Lisle Austin – who was banned by FIFA for daring to seek independent legal redress in the normal courts of the Bahamas – will attest.

Critically, government and law enforcement officials across the world should not let the FIFA pseudo-judicial charade to continue. FIFA justice is no justice at all.

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