

**NATIONAL RAILROAD ADJUSTMENT BOARD
THIRD DIVISION**

**Award No. 45461
Docket No. MW-48330
25-3-NRAB-00003-230580**

The Third Division consisted of the regular members and in addition Referee Michael Capone when award was rendered.

**(Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division –
(IBT Rail Conference**

PARTIES TO DISPUTE: (
(Wisconsin Central Ltd.

STATEMENT OF CLAIM:

“Claim of the System Committee of the Brotherhood that:

- (1) The discipline [five (5) days actual suspension from service] imposed upon Mr. K. Tikkanen, by letter dated June 29, 2022, for alleged violation of AMC Violation, Attendance Management Guidelines, WC Engineering Notice #84 - 2022 Vacation Scheduling was arbitrary, capricious and in violation of the Agreement (Carrier’s File WC BMWED-2022-00028 WCR).**
- (2) The appeal*, as presented by General Chairman J. Letizia, by letter dated June 30, 2022, shall now be paid as presented because the Carrier failed to comply with the explicit requirements of Rule 30 of the Agreement.**
- (3) As a consequence of the violations referred to in Parts (1) and/or (2) above, Claimant K. Tikkanen is entitled to the complete remedy prescribed in Rule 31 of the Agreement as well as having his seniority restored, his accredited months of service, and all benefits that were not received during his time out of service.**

***The appeal letter will be reproduced within our submission.”**

FINDINGS:

The Third Division of the Adjustment Board, upon the whole record and all the evidence, finds that:

The carrier or carriers and the employee or employees involved in this dispute are respectively carrier and employee within the meaning of the Railway Labor Act, as approved June 21, 1934.

This Division of the Adjustment Board has jurisdiction over the dispute involved herein.

Parties to said dispute were given due notice of hearing thereon.

The Claimant, Kyle Tikkanen, is a Welder Helper employed by the Carrier for approximately eight years. On May 6, 2022, the Claimant was notified of a hearing and investigation to be held on May 17, 2022 for using a vacation day without supervisor approval after marking off sick on April 22, 2022. After two postponements the hearing was held on June 9, 2022. The Claimant was notified on June 29, 2022 that he was found guilty and assessed a five-day actual suspension. The record indicates that the Carrier denied subsequent appeals by the Organization.

In accordance with Rule 30, CLAIMS AND GRIEVANCES, the parties held a conference on July 27, 2022, to discuss the dispute. Whereas the claim was not resolved during the conference the Carrier denied the appeal on December 21, 2022. On January 26, 2023, the Organization alleged that the Carrier committed a fatal procedural error when it violated paragraph (D) of Rule 30. The Organization filed its notice of intent with the Third Division. The claim is now properly before the Board for adjudication.

The following contract language from Rule 30 is relevant to the dispute.

RULE 30 – CLAIMS AND GRIEVANCES, in pertinent part, reads as follows:

“D. The Committee shall review the entire record of each dispute. A majority of the Committee is required to resolve the dispute. Decisions made pursuant to this process will be made in writing, addressed to the

individual who files the appeal within sixty (60) days of the meeting date, and will represent the final step of claim or grievance handling on the Company's property. The handling of claims or grievances by the Committee will constitute any 'conference' prerequisite for submission of the dispute to any tribunal established pursuant to law or agreement.

* * *

G. Claims not progressed by the Organization within the appropriate time limits shall be barred from further consideration. Claims not answered by the Company within the appropriate time limit shall be paid as presented. Failure to respond to a claim within the appropriate time limit shall not be considered a precedent or waiver of the contentions of the company as to other similar claims or grievances.

* * *

The Board first addresses the Organization's claim of procedural error and finds that it must be sustained. The record establishes that the "Labor/Management Resolution Committee" identified in Rule 30(C) was convened on July 27, 2022, wherein the parties addressed the instant claim. The Carrier issued its written decision denying the claim on December 21, 2022, which exceeded the 60-day period wherein it was required to respond to the Organization as provided for in Rule 30(D).

There is ample arbitral authority to conclude that where the time limit provisions in an agreement clearly requires the dismissal or payment of a claim when it is filed late, the Board must find that a procedural error occurred in favor of the party asserting the violation. Where the Board finds a procedural error that requires the claim be sustained, we need not address the merits of the dispute.

The Claimant shall be made whole as provided for in Rule 31(I) of the Agreement.

AWARD

Claim sustained.

ORDER

This Board, after consideration of the dispute identified above, hereby orders that an award favorable to the Claimant(s) be made. The Carrier is ordered to make the Award effective on or before 30 days following the postmark date the Award is transmitted to the parties.

NATIONAL RAILROAD ADJUSTMENT BOARD
By Order of Third Division

Dated at Chicago, Illinois, this 3rd day of April 2025.