2018 IL App (1st) 171242-U
Order filed: July 13, 2018

FIRST DISTRICT
FIFTH DIVISION

No. 1-17-1242

IN THE
APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

LINDA CAMERON,	)	Appeal from the
	)	Circuit Court of
Plaintiff-Appellant,	)	Cook County.
	)	
v.	)	No. 16 M1 300021
	)	
CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY,	)	Honorable
	)	Brendan O'Brien,
Defendant-Appellee.	)	Judge Presiding.

JUSTICE ROCHFORD delivered the judgment of the court.
Justices Hall and Lampkin concurred in the judgment.

O R D E R

¶ 1 ***Held***: We affirmed the judgment of the trial court where the record is insufficient to consider plaintiff-appellant's claims of error.

¶ 2 Plaintiff-appellant, Linda Cameron, *pro se* appeals from the trial court's entry of a directed verdict in favor of defendant-appellee, Chicago Transit Authority. On appeal, plaintiff contends that the trial court did not permit her to show her version of a certain video, that the trial court was biased against her because she did not have an attorney, and that the court erred

when it granted defendant's motion for the entry of a directed verdict. We affirm.[1]

¶ 3 The record on appeal shows that, in January 2016, plaintiff *pro se* filed a complaint against defendant alleging that, on January 20, 2015, she suffered a number of injuries, including to her hip and shoulder, when she fell while riding one of defendant's buses.

¶ 4 On March 31, 2016, the case was transferred to mandatory arbitration. The matter proceeded to arbitration on November 16, 2016. Following the arbitration hearing, where all parties participated in good faith, the arbitrators entered a finding for defendant. Plaintiff then filed *pro se* a notice that she "reject[ed] the Award of the Arbitrators."

¶ 5 In January 2017, defendant filed a notice indicating that it intended to offer into evidence video surveillance footage (video) from the bus at the time of plaintiff's alleged fall.

¶ 6 The matter proceeded to a jury trial on May 12, 2017. In a written order, the trial court granted defendant's motion for a directed verdict, finding that "plaintiff has produced no evidence of breach of duty or causation." The court further found that the video "provided to plaintiff in discovery is an identical and true copy of the video stipulated to by the parties and presented in court as evidence." Plaintiff filed *pro se* a notice of appeal that same day.

¶ 7 Initially, we observe that our review of this appeal is hindered by plaintiff's failure to fully comply with Supreme Court Rule 341(h) (eff. May 25, 2018). It is well established that "a court of review is entitled to have briefs submitted that are articulate, organized and present a cohesive legal argument in conformity with supreme court rules." *Schwartz v. Great Central*

[1] The parties have not requested oral argument. We had previously entered an order pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 352(a) (eff. July 1, 2018) stating that the case would be decided without oral argument for this reason.

Insurance Co., 188 Ill. App. 3d 264, 268 (1989) (citing *In re Application of Anderson*, 162 Ill. App. 3d 815, 819 (1987)). Plaintiff's *pro se* status does not excuse her from complying with the appellate procedures required by our supreme court rules. *Twardowski v. Holiday Hospitality Franchising, Inc.*, 321 Ill. App. 3d 509, 511 (2001). Here, although plaintiff used a form approved by the Illinois Supreme Court when filing her brief, she has failed to articulate a legal argument which would allow a meaningful review of her claims, and provides no citation to the record. See Ill. S. Ct. R. 341(h)(7) (eff. May 25, 2018) (appellant's briefs "shall contain the contentions of the appellant and the reasons therefor, with citation of the authorities and the pages of the record relied on"). "Where an appellant's brief fails to comply with our supreme court rules, this court has the inherent authority to dismiss the appeal." *Epstein v. Galuska*, 362 Ill. App. 3d 36, 42 (2005) (citing *In re Marriage of Gallagher*, 256 Ill. App. 3d 439, 442 (1993)). Considering the form and content of plaintiff's brief, it would be within our discretion to dismiss the instant appeal. However, because the issues are simple, plaintiff made an effort to present her appeal by use of the approved form brief, and we have the benefit of a cogent appellee's brief (see *Twardowski*, 321 Ill. App. 3d at 511), we choose not to dismiss the appeal on this ground. See *Harvey v. Carponelli*, 117 Ill. App. 3d 448, 451 (1983). However, deficiencies in the appellate record prevent us from reviewing plaintiff's claims on appeal.

¶ 8 As previously stated, on appeal, plaintiff argues that the trial court did not permit her to show her version of the video, was biased against her because she did not have an attorney, and erred when it granted defendant's motion for the entry of a directed verdict.

¶ 9 The record on appeal includes a common law record, but there is no transcript of the trial

proceedings, nor an acceptable substitute which complies with Supreme Court Rule 323 (eff. July 1, 2017). Without a trial transcript or an acceptable substitute, we are unable to review the interaction between plaintiff and the trial court, determine what evidence was admitted or excluded at trial, have no knowledge of what arguments were presented at trial, and have no record of the trial court's evidentiary or other rulings. Thus, plaintiff has failed to provide this court with the means to review her claims of error and, any doubts arising from the incompleteness of the record, must be resolved against her. *Foutch v. O'Bryant*, 99 Ill. 2d 389, 391-92 (1984).

¶ 10 Under these circumstances, we must presume that the court acted in conformity with the law and ruled properly after considering the evidence before it. *Corral v. Mervis Industries, Inc*., 217 Ill. 2d 144, 156-57 (2005). In the absence of a report of proceedings or other record of the trial, we have no basis for disturbing the trial court's judgment. *Foutch*, 99 Ill. 2d at 391-92.

¶ 11 For the aforementioned reasons, the judgment of the circuit court of Cook County is affirmed.

¶ 12 Affirmed.