



MEDIA RELEASE

FOOTBALL – 2019 AFC ASIAN CUP

THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT (CAS) DISMISSES THE APPEAL FILED BY THE UAE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Lausanne, 3 August 2020 - The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has issued its decision in the arbitration procedure between the United Arab Emirates Football Association (UAEFA), the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and the Qatar Football Association (QFA). The CAS Panel dismissed the UAEFA's appeal and confirmed the decision issued by the AFC Appeal Committee on 20 May 2019 in which the UAEFA's protest against the eligibility of two players that represented Qatar during the semi-final match UAE v. Qatar on 29 January 2019 was dismissed.

On 29 January 2019, the teams from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates played each other in a semi-final match. Qatar won the match 4-0 and went on to win the tournament. Shortly after the semi-final game, the UAEFA filed a protest with the AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee (AFC DEC) alleging that two of the players fielded by Qatar (Almoez Ali and Bassam Al Rawi) were ineligible to represent the QFA according to the AFC Asian Cup 2019 Competition Regulations and the relevant FIFA regulations (the applicable regulations). Following an investigation, on 15 April 2019, the AFC DEC dismissed the protest. The UAEFA then lodged an appeal with the AFC Appeal Committee which was dismissed on 20 May 2019.

On 21 June 2019, the UAEFA filed an appeal at the CAS seeking to have the Challenged Decision set aside and replaced with a ruling that QFA had violated the applicable regulations and, as a consequence, that the UAE be awarded the victory of the semi-final match and all benefits resulting from the victory of said match, in particular in relation to the AFC Competitions Ranking. In particular, UAEFA considered that the mother of Almoez Ali was not born in Qatar, which means that the Player should have been declared ineligible to represent the QFA. UAEFA no longer challenged the eligibility of Bassam Al Rawi, who was suspended during the semi-final.

The CAS Panel in charge of the matter conducted a hearing with the parties, their legal representatives, witnesses and experts on 12 March 2020.

The CAS Panel noted that the mother of Almoez Ali holds dual nationality (Qatar/Sudan) but was comfortably satisfied that the Player is a Qatari national who never represented another national association and that he has other ties to his new country Qatar, notably that his biological mother was born in Qatar. As a result, the Panel rules that Almoez Ali was eligible to compete for Qatar in the AFC Cup Semi-Finals against the UAE. Accordingly, the CAS Panel confirmed the Challenged Decision.