



MEDIA RELEASE

FOOTBALL – CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL 2018/2019

THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT (CAS) DISMISSES THE APPEAL OF WYDAD ATHLETIC CLUB

Lausanne, 18 September 2020 - The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has issued its decision in the appeal filed by the Moroccan club Wydad Athletic Club (WAC) against the Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF) and the Tunisian club Espérance Sportive de Tunis (EST) in relation to the decision taken by the CAF Appeals Board on 15 September 2019, which confirmed the earlier decision of the CAF Disciplinary Board dated 7 August 2019.

The CAS has dismissed the appeal and confirmed the decision of the CAF Appeals Board in full. Accordingly, Espérance Sportive de Tunis is confirmed as winner of the CAF Champions League 2018/2019.

The final of the CAF Champions League 2018/2019 was disputed by WAC and EST over two matches. The first took place on 24 May 2019 in Rabat/Morocco and ended 1-1. The second took place on 31 May 2019 in Rades/Tunisia and was severely disrupted by incidents both on and off the pitch. The match was then definitively cancelled following the decision of WAC not to resume play. A win was declared for EST, which led to EST being announced as winner of the CAF Champions League 2018/2019. On 5 June 2019 the CAF Executive Committee annulled the result of the second match and ordered that it be replayed at a neutral venue. Such decision was in turn annulled by the CAS on 31 July 2019, following appeals from both teams.

On 7 August 2019, the CAF Disciplinary Board issued a decision in which WAC was sanctioned by the loss by forfeit of the return match and was fined a total of USD 35,000 for the abandonment of the match and for the use of smoke bombs by its supporters. WAC filed an appeal against such decision with the CAF Appeal Board, which dismissed the appeal on 15 September 2019. Then, WAC filed an appeal against such decision at CAS.

The CAS Panel found in particular that the WAC's players decision not to resume play after the interruption of the final in the 59th minute of the game constituted an abandonment in the sense of Article 148 of the CAF Disciplinary Code and that the CAF Appeals Board was correct in confirming, by its Appealed Decision, the Disciplinary Board's decision to declare that the WAC lost the return leg of the final by forfeit. Accordingly, the CAS Panel dismissed the appeal.