

Football Inquiry Opened Into Racist Jibe at Roberto Carlos

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The  **Moscow Times**

SAMARA — Russia's football league is opening an investigation after a banana was thrown at Roberto Carlos during a league match this week, the second such racist taunt to be faced by the former World Cup winner in three months.

The Brazilian, who joined Anzhi Makhachkala earlier this year, quit the pitch in protest before the final whistle after the banana was thrown from the stands in stoppage time of a game at Krylya Sovetov on Wednesday.

Krylya Sovetov will also begin its own inquiry into the incident, according to the web site of the Sport Express daily.

"I'm outraged by the sickening behavior of this fan, who, in fact, insulted not only me but all the players," Carlos told Sport Express. "I hope the Russian Federation, UEFA and FIFA will give an adequate evaluation to this disgusting incident."

He said his decision to walk off had nothing to do with his side's 3-0 lead at the time. His team

ended up winning 3-0.

"I did it deliberately because I have suffered a bitter disappointment and I didn't want to continue to play in the match," he said. "Believe me, I would have done it at any scoreline."

He also said he raised two fingers at the side of the pitch "to remind [people] that it was the second such case in the short time that I've been playing in Russia."

In March, Russian champion Zenit St. Petersburg was fined \$10,000 after one of its fans offered a banana to Carlos at a pre-match ceremony.

The 38-year-old left wingback, who won the World Cup in 2002, joined the Russian club earlier this year from Corinthians.

"It's a pity," the Brazilian said. "The majority of the people in the country treat players, including foreign ones, cordially and with respect. Unfortunately, there are also freaks, such as this one."

He added that a senior Krylya club official came to the changing room to apologize.

"I'm not used to racism in football," he told RIA-Novosti. "Russia should not be an exception."

Sergei Fursenko, president of the Russian Football Federation, told Sport Express that his executive committee would discuss the incident at an extraordinary meeting.

"We will sort out the situation and seriously punish those guilty," he said. "We must fight racism in the stands decisively."

The incident was also condemned by Anzhi coach Gadzhi Gadzhiyev.

"A banana thrown on the field left an impression as lingering as the joy of our victory," Gadzhiyev said. "One cannot remain indifferent about a prank like this."

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