

Russia's CSKA Moscow Punished Over Abuse of Caucasus Fans

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CSKA must close six specified areas of its stadium for a league game on Aug. 22.

Russian Premier League club CSKA Moscow has been punished with a partial stadium closure over an incident in which its fans abused opposition supporters with racist chants.

CSKA fans chanted slogans about inhabitants of Russia's Caucasus region, home to ethnic minority groups, throughout CSKA's 1-0 win over Caucasus-based club Anzhi Makhachkala on Saturday.

The Russian Football Union ruled Wednesday that the chants violated rules against "swearing and also insults," but did not charge CSKA under anti-racism rules.

CSKA must close six specified areas of its stadium for a league game on Aug. 22. Only women and children under the age of 12 can be admitted to those sections.

The club was also fined 500,000 rubles (\$7,800) for an abusive banner bearing the words "animal planet" next to a version of the Anzhi badge modified to include an apparent anti-

gay slur.

Some CSKA fans had said they were abused by Anzhi supporters with sexist chants about ethnic Russian women. The RFU did not rule on the issue, with Anzhi's only punishment being a 10,000 ruble (\$156) fine for use of pyrotechnics by fans, a sanction also levied against CSKA.

It is the latest controversy for CSKA, which was required to play all three of its Champions League group stage games last season behind closed doors after a string of racist and violent incidents.

Last month, CSKA's entrant for the Russian Premier League's annual beauty contest was stripped of her "Miss Charming" title after her social media account was found to contain numerous neo-Nazi posts and racist statements, including some directed against people from the Caucasus.

Tensions in Russian society often run high between ethnic Russians and ethnic minority groups, including those from the Caucasus region.

Ahead of Russia hosting the 2018 World Cup, anti-discrimination group FARE produced a report in February listing over 200 cases of racist or discriminatory behavior in Russian football over the previous two seasons.

Of those, the report described 22 cases of "anti-Caucasus displays" and 15 attacks on people from ethnic groups hailing from the region.

Black players have also faced abuse, with Zenit St. Petersburg striker Hulk saying last month that racism was present at "almost every game" in Russia.

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