

Cairo, Egypt, September 17 (Infosplusgabon) - The Confederation of African Football (CAF) Appeals Board has rejected the appeal by Wydad Athletic Club on Morocco with respect to the second leg final of the Total CAF Champions League 2018/19, thereby upholding and confirming that Tunisia's Esperance win the trophy in May.

At its meeting at the CAF Headquarters in Cairo on Sunday, the Board ruled that “the absence of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) has no legal effects whatsoever and that its sole purpose is to aid the referee to take the correct decision...”

It said that the referee is vested with the power to have the final decision on the field of play since the start of the game, and that his decision is not up to review by the Appeal Board.

CAF's Appeal Board said: “The match officials’ reports were very clear that the Wydad Athletic Club’s players refused to resume the match even after several attempts conducted by the referee, to the point that the referee waited almost 90 minutes before he whistled the end of the match.

“The Appeal Board has noted that the stoppage of almost 90 minutes was due to the Wydad Athletic Club’s players’ failure to resume the match, the players were then instructed to resume play by the referee who has seen his attempts fail to no avail. Therefore the Appeal Board

confirms that the match was forfeited by Wydad Athletic Club because their players refused to resume the match."

The first leg in Casablanca ended 1-1 and Esperance were leading 1-0 in the second leg when Wydad Casablanca equalised. But the referee ruled out the goal for an infringement. When they the Moroccans asked for the Video Assisted Referee (VAR), it was realised that although it had been set up, it was not working and the players had not been told.

When the Moroccans refused to continue the match, it was called off and the Esperance were declared winners on 2-1 aggregate.

CAF nullified the second leg match on appeal from Wydad Casablanca.

Both sides appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS), which ruled that CAF executive committee did not have jurisdiction to order a replay of the final match.

CAF then declared Esperance winners of the trophy but Wudad appealed to CAF again which on Sunday rejected the appeal.

Meanwhile, Wydad Casablanca say they will return to the CAS over the case.

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