Beat: Sports

Alternative host sought as Morocco is thrown out of African Nations Cup

-, 12.11.2014, 01:21 Time

USPA News - Morocco`s national team has been disqualified from participating in the 2015 African Nations Cup after its government refused to host the event over Ebola fears, but the organizers of Africa`s football championship said Tuesday that they were reviewing a number of alternative hosts. The Executive Committee of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) met in Cairo, Egypt, on Tuesday after the Moroccan government reiterated its demand for January`s event to be delayed by at least a year due to Ebola.

CAF had previously required Morocco to communicate its final position by last Saturday, saying that there was no reason to delay the championship. "[Saturday`s] response clearly indicates that the Royal Moroccan Football Federation reiterated its refusal to hold the competition on the dates indicated," CAF said in a statement on Tuesday. "Therefore, having firmly and unanimously notified on 3 November its decision to keep the competition on the dates indicated, the Executive Committee confirmed that the Orange Africa Cup of Nations 2015 will not take place in Morocco." Morocco`s last-minute refusal to host the event as scheduled, from January 17 through February 8, caused Morocco`s national team to be disqualified from participating in the upcoming championship. CAF said it will decide on further sanctions at a later date due to Morocco`s breach of regulations and contractual provisions, which includes the Host Association Agreement that was signed in April. It is now unclear when and where the championship will take place, but CAF said it had received applications from several African countries in which they confirmed their desire to host the 2015 competition as scheduled. "These applications are currently under review and the Executive Committee will finalize the selection of the successful National Association shortly," CAF said in its statement. The confederation did not say which countries had expressed their interest in hosting the event, but it said that upcoming qualifying matches will proceed as scheduled. Morocco, which also hosted the African Nations Cup in 1988, had previously indicated that it wanted to postpone the event by at least a year due to the ongoing Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which has killed at least 5,000 people over the past year. But CAF said there was no reason to cancel the event and noted that Morocco had no Ebola concerns for December`s FIFA Club World Cup. The World Health Organization (WHO) does not recommend the canceling of international meetings or mass gatherings due to Ebola, which is a highly infectious disease but requires direct contact with bodily fluids to spread.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-2922/alternative-host-sought-as-morocco-is-thrown-out-of-african-nations-cup.html

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