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Riots...

«Haram» in Dakar

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A Despicable Act of Racism

Barcelona player Lamine Yamal was subjected to racist abuse from an Atlético Madrid supporter during their La Liga clash on Matchday 30, which ended in a dramatic 2–1 victory for Barça. Footage from the stands shows the supporter directing offensive remarks at Yamal as he prepared to take a corner, shouting: “You’re very ugly... go back to Morocco.”

Yamal – who was eligible to represent Morocco due to his heritage before choosing to play for Spain internationally – appeared visibly shaken and angered after the match, despite his team’s victory and their growing proximity to securing the league title.

Images captured him leaving the pitch, crossing paths with his German coach Hansi Flick, who attempted to speak with him. The player, however, gestured in frustration and declined the exchange, continuing toward the dressing room while speaking with

a member of Barcelona’s technical staff. These incidents come against a broader backdrop of recurring tensions, recently reignited during the friendly match between Spain and Egypt, reviving debate within the sporting world over the country that will host the 2030 World Cup final, set to be co-organized by Morocco, Spain, and Portugal.

During that match, which ended in a draw, sections of the crowd directed racist chants not only at Egyptian players but also at Muslims, chanting: “If you don’t jump, you’re Muslim,” sparking widespread controversy across Spanish and international media.

Despite the deterrent measures established by FIFA to combat such behavior – including fines of up to €30,000, stadium closures, and travel bans for supporters – the deeper battle remains one of prevention.

Education, particularly within schools, stands as the most effective long-term response to uproot the causes of this scourge – rooted in intolerance, ignorance, and the influence of extremist groups – which continues to affect segments of football audiences across Europe. ♦



Ismail Rouhi



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Surfing: Moroccan double triumph at Royal St Andrews



Lilia Tbay and Tifa Bouchgha

Moroccan surfing delivered an outstanding performance on the international stage, thanks to the exceptional displays of Lilia TEBBAI and Teva BOUCHGUA, who secured titles in their respective categories at the Royal St Andrews Rip Curl Cup (QS 4000), held in Port Alfred, South Africa—a key event in the qualification pathway to the World Surf League (WSL).

The competition brought together top surfers from across Africa and beyond, in events rated QS 4000 for men and QS 2000 for women, providing an ideal platform to showcase talent under the challenging conditions of one of the region's most technical surf spots.

In a statement, the Moroccan Royal Surfing Federation praised Lilia TEBBAI's performance, highlighting

“her strong technical ability, excellent wave reading, and remarkable consistency throughout the heats.”

Her final performance enabled her to defeat South Africa's Zoe Steyn, confirming her status among Africa's elite surfers.

Meanwhile, Teva BOUCHGUA delivered an impressive display marked by power, precision, and commitment, earning a well-deserved victory over South African Connor Slijpen in the final and paving the way for his continued rise on the international scene.

The Federation described this double victory as a historic achievement for Morocco in a World Surf League qualifying event.

It also reflects the steady progress of Moroccan surfers and their ability to compete with leading African and international talents.

The success of Lilia TEBBAI and Teva BOUCHGUA stands as recognition of the talent and dedication of Moroccan athletes, marking a significant step forward in their international careers. This achievement further highlights the continuous development of surfing in Morocco and serves as an inspiration for the next generation.

Moreover, this exceptional performance reinforces Morocco's growing status as an emerging force in African and global surfing, while underscoring the effectiveness of training and support programs guiding athletes toward excellence.

The double victory of Lilia TEBBAI and Teva BOUCHGUA will remain a landmark moment in Moroccan surfing history and a key milestone in their journey toward the highest levels of international competition. ♦

Kamil Belmrah crowned African water skiing champion

Moroccan athlete Kamil Belmrah was crowned African champion for 2026 across all water skiing disciplines, in addition to being named Africa's best skier of the year, during the African Championships held from April 2 to 5 at Van Bach Dam Park in Namibia.

In the slalom event, the Moroccan athlete delivered an outstanding performance, outperforming his South African rivals, who have long dominated the discipline.

This double achievement reflects the steady rise of the 21-year-old athlete, who had already made his mark on the international stage in 2021 by becoming the first African to win gold in the under-17 slalom category at the European and African Championships.

That same year, he secured a silver medal at the World Masters in Callaway Gardens, United States, before continuing his momentum with a series of notable achievements, including an African record across all categories at the U21 World Cup qualifiers in Mexico, a bronze medal at the Europe-Africa U21 Championships in Bordeaux in 2023, and a fourth-place finish at the U21 World Cup in Calgary in August 2025. ♦



Kamil Belmrah

MAS ultras denounce refereeing against Renaissance sportive de Berkane

The Fatal Tigers, an ultras group supporting the Maghreb Association Sportive de Fès (MAS), stated that their team's recent match against Renaissance sportive de Berkane did not take place under normal conditions, citing refereeing decisions that, in their view, directly affected the balance and outcome of the game.

In a statement, the ultras argued that the course of the match shifted at crucial moments due to decisions lacking clear regulatory basis, particularly a penalty awarded against MAS, which they described as highly questionable and inconsistent with standard officiating criteria.

According to the Fatal Tigers, such decisions raise serious concerns about their underlying motives.

The group further stressed that what deepens the frustration — and even provokes outrage — is the fact that a league presented as professional continues to witness such refereeing errors, suggesting a lack of even the most basic standards of professionalism in its management, thereby undermining the competition's image and credibility.

The ultras also expressed concern over what they perceive as a recurring pattern, with such incidents arising whenever the Maghreb Association Sportive de Fès builds positive momentum through strong performances and results, as though this progress were being deliberately hindered by factors contrary to the spirit of fair competition. ♦



Donald Trump is playing golf

Golf: Elite U.S. club rejects Donald Trump's membership

Renowned golf coach Butch Harmon has revealed the reasons behind the refusal to grant former U.S. President Donald Trump membership at the prestigious Augusta National Golf Club, stating that his personality does not align with the club's strict standards.

Widely regarded as one of the most exclusive golf clubs in the world, Augusta National, located in Georgia, hosts the annual Masters Tournament.

Harmon, 82, who has known Trump since his youth, attributed the decision to what he described as an "arrogant" personality. Speaking to the Daily Mail, he said: "I think you can answer that yourselves. He's arrogant. I don't believe he fits the profile of an Augusta member."

He emphasized that the decision had nothing to do with Trump's political status: "The fact that he was president is irrelevant. Other presidents have played golf without being members. Clinton and Obama played. I simply believe his personality does not suit this club. That's as far as I can go, out of caution." ♦

Senegal Softens Its Tone: Motsepe Welcomed as a Guest of Honor

The president of the Senegalese Football Federation, Abdoulaye Fall, has responded positively to the upcoming visit to Dakar by Confederation of African Football (CAF) president Patrice Motsepe, aimed at easing tensions following the final of the 35th Africa Cup of Nations, "Morocco 2025."

Speaking to Senegalese media, Abdoulaye Fall stated that his country would extend a warm welcome to Motsepe.

"Senegal is the land of Teranga — a land of hospitality and generosity. We will welcome the CAF president with open arms. He is at home, among his African brothers," he said.

Motsepe is expected to hold meetings with officials from the national federation, as well as with the Senegalese president.

The visit seeks to bring an end to strained relations between Senegal and CAF, after several Senegalese officials publicly questioned the integrity of the governing body and challenged its decisions regarding the AFCON final.

It is expected to be a turning point in one of the most contentious episodes in recent African football history.

CAF's Appeals Committee had ruled in favor of Morocco following the incidents that marred the final, confirming a 3-0 victory after the Senegalese team left the pitch for approximately 15 minutes.

Rather than pursuing formal legal channels to defend their position, Senegalese officials opted to level accusations in multiple directions — through federation representatives and players alike — questioning CAF's decisions and impartiality, and accusing the body of corruption. ♦



Iran pushes to relocate World Cup matches from the United States, raises boycott threat

Iran's Minister of Sports, Ahmad Donyamali, has announced that the Iranian government will not make a final decision regarding the national team's participation in the World Cup until it receives a response from FIFA concerning the relocation of its matches. The Iranian Football Federation is seeking to move its three group-stage matches from the United States to Mexico, citing the U.S. military involvement alongside Israel in strikes that have fueled the ongoing conflict in the region.

Last month, the federation confirmed that discussions with FIFA were underway regarding a potential change of venue, while Iran's Ministry of Sports imposed a ban on national teams and clubs traveling to countries it considers hostile until further notice.

Despite this, FIFA President Gianni Infantino stated last week that Iran would play its matches as scheduled.

In remarks to Anadolu Agency, Donyamali said: "Our request to move Iran's matches from the United States to Mexico remains in place, but we have yet to receive a response."

He added: "If approved, Iran's participation in the World Cup will be

confirmed. However, FIFA has not responded so far."

He continued: "As Minister of Sports, I will work with the federation to prepare the team. However, the final decision rests with our government."

Iran is scheduled to play all its Group G matches on U.S. soil, facing New Zealand and Belgium in Los Angeles before taking on Egypt in Seattle.

Last month, U.S. President Donald Trump stated that while Iran's participation in matches held in the United States would be welcomed, it could raise safety concerns for players, before later clarifying that no threats would originate from the United States.

Donyamali concluded: "According to FIFA regulations, security must be ensured by the host country. However, with the World Cup approaching, providing such guarantees under current circumstances remains uncertain."

He added: "Under these conditions, the likelihood of Iran playing its matches in the United States is very low. Nevertheless, if adequate security guarantees are provided, our government will make a final decision regarding participation." ♦

Marathon des Sables: Morocco's Mohamed El Morabity claims Stage Two victory



The Moroccan runner Mohamed El Morabity

Moroccan runner Mohammed El Morabity claimed victory in Stage Two of the 40th edition of the legendary Marathon des Sables, covering a distance of 40.5 kilometers.

The stage, punctuated by checkpoints at kilometers 8, 15, 21, 28.1, and 33.7, showcased a refined blend of speed and tactical intelligence, offering promising signs for the remainder of the competition.

The race started at 6:00 a.m., allowing runners to benefit from relatively cool desert conditions, with temperatures remaining mild until sunrise.

From the early kilometers, French runner Mickaël Gras set a strong pace, taking the lead in an attempt to challenge the dominance of the El Morabity brothers. However, experience ultimately prevailed. Mohammed and Rachid El Morabity regained control of the race from the third checkpoint onward before launching a decisive attack. Mohammed completed the stage in 2 hours, 58 minutes, and 26

seconds, followed by his brother Rachid (3:03:01), while Mickaël Gras finished third in 3:03:46.

In the women's race, France's Maryline Nakache dominated from start to finish, winning in 3 hours, 48 minutes, and 21 seconds.

She was followed by fellow French athlete Agathe Thié and American runner Desirée Linden, who secured second and third places in 4:10:31 and 4:13:00, respectively. As Stage Three approaches—shorter yet strategically significant—attention is already turning toward the major challenge of Stage Four, a demanding 100-kilometer stretch.

The event spans 11 days, including 9 days of complete self-sufficiency in the desert, during which participants must cover nearly 270 kilometers while managing their own food supplies. It is a unique experience combining physical endurance and mental resilience in an environment that is both breathtaking and unforgiving. ♦

“You are ugly, go back to Morocco”.. vile racism targets Yamal

Lamine Yamal, the FC Barcelona player, was subjected to racist abuse by an Atlético Madrid fan during the teams' match in Round 30 of La Liga, which ended with a 2-1 win for Barça in the final moments.

A video from the stands showed the fan directing offensive remarks at Yamal while he was taking a corner kick, saying: “You are very ugly... go back to Morocco.”

Yamal, who was eligible to represent Morocco due to his heritage but chose to play internationally for Spain, appeared emotional and angry after the match despite his team's victory and their approach toward securing the league title.

Footage showed him leaving the pitch, passing by his German coach Hansi Flick, who tried to speak with him, but the player gestured angrily and refused to talk before heading to the dressing room while speaking with a member of Barcelona's technical staff. ♦



Lamine Yamal

"Criminals, Not Supporters!"



Since a portion of the curtain has been drawn — leaving the final outcome yet to unfold — on the attempted disruption of the Africa Cup of Nations final, which Morocco successfully organized to international standards, propaganda machines have been working relentlessly to impose a narrative portraying those arrested following the unrest in the Senegalese supporters' section as "detained," "innocent," or "wrongfully arrested."

This is no trivial propaganda — nor is it inexpensive — as it mobilizes vast resources worth millions of dollars. Faced with such a stream of content, one is almost compelled to resort to the bluntest forms of expression to convey the astonishment provoked by the extent to which some have embraced this narrative, even among individuals living in countries where sports-related violence is unequivocally treated as a criminal offense warranting the harshest penalties.

Penalties that may go as far as depriving offenders of basic civil rights — rights that, in many cases, are not even withdrawn from those who commit serious offenses against individuals, society, and public order.

In France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, Italy, and many other countries, fines for sports-related violence can reach up to €600,000.

Is that all?

Certainly not.

Pitch invasions... assaults on supporters, players, or officials... destruction of infrastructure... the use of pyrotechnic devices...

All of these acts are classified as criminal offenses, punishable by prison sentences ranging from three to ten years, in addition to bans from accessing any sports venue.

In the United Kingdom, individuals convicted of hooliganism are required, during international or continental matches involving their club or national team, to report to local police stations to surrender their passports, ensuring they cannot travel.

In France, authorities grant the Ministry of the Interior extensive powers, independent of judicial rulings, enabling it to impose administrative travel bans on individuals involved in sports-related violence.

In Italy, the law requires those involved in such incidents to report to police stations before, during, and after their teams' matches. In some cases, they are even prohibited from approaching stadium premises hours before kickoff.

In Germany, a "national supporters database" mandates the regular updating of personal data for anyone attending matches to support their team, regardless of age, gender, or social status.

As for Spain — among the strictest countries in Europe in tackling sports violence — sanctions may extend to collective penalties targeting clubs and their officials, including point deductions in competitions, alongside judicial rulings and substantial fines.

In Morocco, millions watched live as a group of Senegalese supporters committed acts at the Moulay Abdellah Sports Complex, including pitch invasion, assaults, physical violence, and acts of vandalism. And yet, some continue to deny the obvious: those being prosecuted in this case are criminals, not supporters. ♦

*Ahmed
Mediany*

القوة أصلا مؤنث.

#نربحوالرياضة

نلعب
بمسؤولية

18-



نربحوالرياضة

When “local fanaticism” takes precedence over the support of shared belonging



Morocco national team players during a training session

At every stage involving the Moroccan national team — whether a training camp, an official fixture, or even a friendly match — the event extends far beyond what unfolds on the pitch. It echoes through the stands and reverberates across digital spaces.

Do we truly support the national team as we should, or are we merely projecting our narrow allegiances onto it?

In principle, backing the Atlas Lions should be a moment of unity, where supporters rally behind a single national jersey. Yet, at times, it becomes a mirror reflecting unspoken divisions, revealing a gradual shift in how some fans relate to the team: unconditional passion gives way to conditional support.

Over the past decade, amid coaching changes and generational transitions, scenes have emerged that are difficult to

Over the past ten years, with successive coaches and changing generations, we have witnessed scenes that are difficult to justify in a context that is supposed to unite Moroccans

reconcile with a context meant to unite Moroccans.

From the jeers directed at Jamal Harkass in Oujda, to the controversy surrounding goalkeeper Mehdi Benabid’s participation in the 34th edition of the Africa Cup of Nations, to even more striking moments — such as fans celebrating the disallowing of a goal scored by Rabii Hrimat during the latest camp under Mohamed Ouahbi.

These incidents may appear isolated, yet they are bound by a common thread that points to a deeper imbalance.

The issue is no longer criticism — which is natural in football — but the underlying motives that shape it.

A player’s value is sometimes measured more by the club he represents than by his performances for the national team.

When he makes a mistake, it becomes an opportunity for ridicule; when he excels, his success is met with caution or

diminished. It is as though some follow the national team through the lens of club allegiance rather than national identity. This shift is no longer confined to the stands. It has permeated public discourse, particularly on social media, where clearly defined “camps” have emerged: some support a player because of his club affiliation, while others oppose him for the very same reason.

Even the evaluation of the coach has not escaped this dynamic, often shifting from objective assessment to pre-aligned positions aimed more at defending viewpoints than seeking truth.

Amid all this debate, the most fundamental question fades into the background: what truly serves the national team’s interest? Because the national team is not an extension of club rivalries, nor a battleground for settling scores. It is meant to be a space where all differences dissolve. The national jersey does not carry club colors — it embodies the identity of an entire nation.

The consequences are not merely symbolic; they directly affect performances on the pitch.

A player who steps onto the field knowing that part of the crowd is anticipating his failure cannot perform with full mental freedom. Such seemingly minor details

Fans are called upon to unite their voice and set aside their affiliations, and every player who joins the Lions should be supported; if he makes a mistake, the coach is the only person authorized to hold him accountable

can determine the difference between a liberated player and one constrained by pressure.

No one is asking fans to abandon their allegiances — they are part of the essence of the sport. But when it comes to the national team, priorities must be reconsidered.

Support for the national team should neither be conditional nor selective. It must stem from a single conviction: the strength of the team lies in all its components, without exception.

Perhaps the time has come to ask the question more clearly: do we truly want a strong national team capable of competing at the highest level, or are we content with a reflection of our divisions?

The answer is not merely spoken — it is expressed through how we support, how we react, and how well we separate club loyalty from the duty to support the national team.

Ultimately, Moroccan supporters are called upon today to unite their voices, set aside their allegiances, and stand behind every player wearing the Atlas Lions jersey.

And when mistakes occur, it is the coach — and only the coach — who bears the responsibility of addressing them and taking the appropriate decisions at the right time. ♦



A section of the Moroccan fans cheering for the Lions



Mental health..

The regulating force behind the heartbeat of sport

The discussion of high-level sports performance can no longer be confined to physical ability or tactical preparation alone. The psychological factor has now become one of the key determinants of success and sustainability in modern sport. The intensification of competition schedules, combined with rising media and public expectations, places athletes under constant pressure that extends far beyond the playing field. This reality calls for a reassessment of the place of mental health within the sports system, at the intersection of functional pressure and psychological warning signals.

In this context, research in medicine and psychology has established that competition-related psychological pressure is not, in itself, pathological. Rather, it forms part of the natural dynamics of performance, as a moderate level of tension enhances concentration and optimizes neurophysiological responsiveness.

Since the formulation of the Yerkes–Dodson law, which highlights the relationship between psychological arousal and performance quality, it has been recognized that pressure loses its stimulating function and becomes a chronic burden once it exceeds a critical threshold.

At this point, a subtle distinction emerges between healthy competitive pressure and psychological disorder: the former is temporary and intrinsically linked to the competitive context, whereas the latter persists over time, extends beyond it, and affects sleep, motivation, and performance stability. It may also manifest as progressive psychological withdrawal. All of these indicators require professional intervention. The real challenge lies in the ability of the sports environment to identify these early warning signs before they develop into psychological burnout or a definitive withdrawal from the athletic pathway.

Sports Injury... The Invisible Wound

When an athlete sustains an injury, attention is generally focused on medical and physical aspects, while the psychological dimension—despite its decisive impact—remains secondary. Indeed, injury can undermine one of the

When an athlete gets injured, attention is usually focused on the medical and physical aspects, while the psychological dimension remains less prominent, despite its decisive impact

fundamental pillars of athletic identity, namely the sense of competence and control.

Contemporary approaches in sports psychology highlight that the fear of reinjury is one of the main barriers to returning to previous levels of performance, even after full physical recovery.

As a result, mental preparation has become an integral component of rehabilitation programs, through techniques such as motor imagery, confidence rebuilding, and anxiety regulation. True recovery is not achieved when the muscle tissue alone has healed, but when the athlete regains a sense of safety in performance execution.

From the Stigma of Weakness to a Culture of Integrated Performance

For many years, consulting a psychologist in the sports environment was perceived through a stereotypical lens, equating psychological support with an admission of weakness.

However, this perception is gradually evolving, driven by advances in sports sciences and a growing global awareness of the importance of mental health.

In this regard, it is worth noting that statements by several elite athletes about their psychological struggles have not



Mental health experts during one of the training courses

diminished their image; on the contrary, they have redefined strength as the ability to understand and manage oneself. Thus, the role of the psychologist has shifted from crisis intervention to continuous support aimed at enhancing concentration, managing pressure, and maintaining psychological balance throughout the season.

Professional sport is now moving toward a multidisciplinary model, in which doctors, coaches, and psychologists work together within a shared vision that prioritizes the individual before the result.

The New Coach... A Psychological Leader Before Being a Technician

One of the most significant contemporary transformations lies in the redefinition of the coach's role. Leadership style, communication patterns, and the way failure or injuries are handled are all psychological factors that directly influence athletes' performance and mental health. For this reason, foundational training in sports psychology is becoming an increasing requirement within international federations and sports institutions.

The goal is not to turn coaches into therapists, but to equip them with psychological competencies that enable them to understand motivation and pressure dynamics, as well as to detect early signs of psychological distress. A healthy training environment is no longer a luxury, but a prerequisite for sustainable performance.

Toward a Human-Centered Vision of Sports Performance

Sport is undergoing a transformation that reflects a deeper understanding of human performance. The body and mind are not separate entities, but rather a single, integrated system.

The more mental health is recognized as a fundamental pillar, the greater the athlete's chances of achieving stable and sustainable performance. The future of sport lies not only in breaking records, but in building well-rounded and balanced athletes.

Naciri: Psychological Pressure and Fear of Injury, the Main Challenges Facing Moroccan Athletes

In an interview with TELSPORT Arabi, Hamza Naciri, a sports and clinical psychologist, practitioner in mental preparation for athletes and coordinator



The Moroccan team players disappointment after the loss against Senegal

Channane: It Is Time to Rethink the Place of Mental Health in the Sports System

For her part, Sofia Channane, a clinical psychologist and coordinator of training and follow-up within the Association of Mental Health Specialists, stated that high-level sports performance can no longer be reduced to physical or tactical aspects alone. The psychological dimension has become a key factor in achieving success and ensuring continuity in modern sport.

Channane explained that the acceleration of competition schedules and rising media and public expectations have placed athletes under constant pressure that extends beyond the field, requiring a reassessment of the role of mental health within the sports system.

She added that psychological pressure linked to competition is not inherently pathological, but rather part of the natural dynamics of performance. Moderate stress can enhance concentration and improve responsiveness, as demonstrated by research based on the Yerkes-Dodson law. However, the problem arises when this pressure loses its motivational function and turns into a chronic burden.

She emphasized that the difference between healthy competitive pressure and psychological disorder lies in the fact that the former remains temporary and context-bound, while the latter persists and affects deeper aspects such as sleep, motivation, and self-image.

She also stressed that indicators such as a continuous decline in performance, psychological withdrawal, or loss of enjoyment in practice should not be treated as merely temporary phases, as they may signal the onset of a disorder requiring prompt intervention.



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within the Association of Mental Health Specialists, emphasized that the main psychological difficulties faced by Moroccan athletes today are closely linked to the nature of modern sport. They result from a complex interaction between performance pressure and the fragility of the sports environment.

He explained that result-based pressure remains at the forefront of these challenges, with many athletes operating under a binary logic of “success or failure,” generating anxiety and tension that restrict performance freedom. He added that fear of evaluation and losing one’s place within the team further intensifies this feeling, especially when performance is closely tied to personal identity.

He also noted that fear of injury, or of returning to competition after recovery, is a latent concern for many athletes. Its impact extends beyond the physical dimension to self-confidence and the sense of safety, potentially resulting in hesitation or excessive caution during competition. In the same vein, Naciri pointed to deficiencies in certain psychological skills regulating performance, such as attention control and pressure management, which explains the fluctuations observed in some players’ performance between training sessions and matches.

He added that psychological burnout has also become a concerning phenomenon, resulting from the intensity of competitions and accumulated pressure, leading some athletes to gradually lose motivation and enjoyment in practice.

Regarding psychological assessment, Naciri stated that Moroccan athletes have become more open to these scientific tools, although acceptance remains dependent on trust, confidentiality, and clarity of purpose. He stressed that the issue lies not so much in the tools themselves as in the prevailing perceptions surrounding them, as some still associate them with the existence of a “problem,” whereas they are primarily a means of improving performance.

Regarding the nature of the intervention, he explained that psychological work is based on a complementarity between individual and collective approaches, the former addressing each athlete’s specific issues, while the latter aims to improve team climate and strengthen cohesion.

He concluded by affirming that mental preparation has now become a decisive and complementary element to physical and technical preparation, and can even make the difference at the highest levels.



The training reflects the transformations Morocco is experiencing, particularly its openness to major sporting events, and the need this entails for a comprehensive development of the performance system, in line with the ambitions strengthened after the achievements of the national football team

The real challenge is no longer to prove its importance, but to embed it as a daily working culture within the sports system. As he put it, modern sport is no longer driven solely by skill and fitness, but also by mindset, emotion, and the meaning athletes give to their experience.

Sports Psychology in Morocco Gains Ground Through Structured Professional Training

In Morocco, the “HB International Institute” has launched a training program in psychological and mental preparation for athletes.

Hicham Laafou, a psychologist specialized in clinical trauma, pedagogical and scientific coordinator of the program, as well as national coordinator of the sports psychology project within the Association of Mental Health Specialists, shared the



details of this training with TELSPORT Arabi.

He explained that the launch of this program is part of a comprehensive vision aimed at training specialized professionals capable of understanding and managing the psychological dynamics associated with sports performance.

According to him, the program seeks to equip participants with the scientific and ethical foundations of sports psychology as an applied discipline linking behavior and performance, relying on evidence-based assessment, diagnosis, and intervention tools, in contrast to traditional approaches that reduced athletes to their physical dimension alone.

He added that the program responds to an urgent need within the Moroccan sports context, which has given rise to various phenomena requiring analysis and understanding, including crowd pressure, behavioral misconduct in stadiums, and

The launch of the training program in psychological and mental preparation in Morocco is part of a comprehensive vision aimed at training specialized practitioners capable of understanding and managing the psychological dynamics related to athletic performance

violence among players or between supporters. These behaviors are linked to internal and external psychological dynamics that must be scientifically addressed rather than merely observed.

In this context, Laafou pointed out that the program takes into account the transformations taking place in Morocco, particularly its openness to major sporting events, which require a comprehensive development of the performance system, in line with ambitions strengthened by recent achievements in national football. Regarding the program's distinctive features, he emphasized that it is the first of its kind at the national level, both in content and applied approach. It is internationally accredited by reference institutions and based on recognized scientific standards, while relying on both national and international expertise, fostering knowledge exchange and enhancing training quality.

He explained that the program is primarily intended for psychologists and qualified coaches, ensuring a high scientific and professional level.

From a pedagogical perspective, the program is structured over 130 hours, divided into several modules combining theoretical foundations—covering epistemological bases as well as psychological and neuroscientific approaches—and practical components using modern techniques such as cognitive behavioral therapy and mindfulness. This is complemented by workshops and simulated real-life scenarios, including managing anxiety, burnout, or return from injury, with the aim of preparing participants for effective field intervention. In the same vein, he stressed that this training could serve as a real lever for the development of Moroccan sport by addressing psychological and mental gaps among athletes, particularly evident in decisive moments or under pressure. He noted that many cases have shown that mental collapse can precede physical collapse.

Finally, Hicham Laafou called for the adoption of an integrated approach combining physical, tactical, and psychological preparation, while emphasizing the need to structure this field under the supervision of qualified professionals, far from improvisation. The objective is to establish sports psychology as a fundamental pillar in building a national sports system capable of competing at both continental and international levels. ♦



Riots...

«Haram» in Dakar

«Halal» in Rabat!



The supremacy of the rule of law constitutes one of the fundamental pillars upon which states and sporting competitions are built. It serves as the primary guarantee for regulating social relations, protecting rights and freedoms, and ensuring justice among individuals and groups. It is not merely a legal principle, but rather a comprehensive framework governing human behavior across various domains, enforcing respect for general rules without discrimination and affirming that all—individuals and institutions alike—are subject to the same legal order.

The importance of the rule of law emerges as a mechanism for regulating social tensions and preventing descent into chaos or violence, particularly in spaces characterized by high levels of interaction, such as the sporting arena. A notable example can be found in the events that occurred during the final of the thirty-fifth edition of the Africa Cup of Nations hosted by Morocco, when certain segments of Senegalese supporters instigated disorder. In this context, sport is no longer merely a recreational or competitive activity; it has evolved into a complex social sphere that reflects societal contradictions and tensions, reproducing them in both

Sport is no longer merely a recreational or competitive activity; it has become a complex social field that reflects the contradictions and tensions of society, and reproduces them in symbolic and material forms both inside and outside the stadiums

symbolic and material forms within and beyond stadiums. Major sporting events, especially continental tournaments, represent moments of intense expression of national and identity-based belonging, where feelings of pride and allegiance intersect with political, economic, and media stakes. However, in the absence of effective legal regulation and strict adherence to governing rules, such moments can turn into arenas for outbreaks of mass violence, as witnessed in several matches marked by serious incidents of hooliganism.

The violent incidents that accompanied the Africa Cup of Nations final in Morocco, involving Senegalese supporters before a global audience and documented extensively, stand as a telling example of the fragility of adherence to the rule of law within the sporting sphere when collective emotions override legal and ethical constraints. These events demonstrated how shifts in crowd sentiment can escalate into violent behavior, exceeding the bounds of legitimate support and turning into acts of vandalism that endanger individuals and property, while undermining the image of sport as a unifying human value.

Analyzing this phenomenon requires



A scene from the riots during the final of the Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco



A Senegalese fan invades the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat

moving beyond reductive approaches that interpret fan violence as mere individual deviance or isolated behavioral failure. Instead, it must be understood as the outcome of complex interactions among psychological, social, and cultural factors, compounded by a limited legal awareness among certain Senegalese supporters. This underscores the urgent need to strengthen such awareness so that it becomes a guiding reference for behavior. In this regard, the rule of law in the sporting domain presents specific challenges related to the nature of this space, which combines intense enthusiasm with strong emotional dynamics. Here, the law extends beyond punitive provisions to include preventive and educational mechanisms aimed at fostering a culture of respect for rules.

Moreover, the international dimension plays a crucial role in consolidating the rule of law in sports, particularly given the transnational nature of major competitions. Events occurring within stadiums do not remain confined to a local scope; they affect the international image of the host country and influence its relations with other nations. Consequently, adherence to the law during such events becomes a matter of sovereignty, essential

The events that took place during the Africa Cup of Nations final, caused by Senegalese fans, open a deep debate about the role of law and its authority within sporting spaces

to ensuring their smooth conduct. The incidents of violence witnessed during the AFCON final in Morocco serve as a reminder that the rule of law is not a fixed given, but an ongoing process requiring vigilance and renewal. It is not achieved solely through the existence of legal texts, but through their effective enforcement and respect in practice. It is also closely linked to individuals' awareness of its importance and their willingness to abide by it, even in moments of intense emotional strain.

In this context, the magazine "TELSPORT Arabi" opens a dedicated dossier on the AFCON final, aiming to sound the alarm, highlight the seriousness of such incidents, and broaden the debate on ways to strengthen the rule of law within the sporting sphere. This domain has become a complex challenge requiring a comprehensive approach that integrates legal, educational, and cultural dimensions, as well as the extent to which states adhere to regulatory frameworks. At a time when stadiums are no longer mere venues of entertainment but mirrors reflecting the level of societal development, strengthening respect for the law within them becomes a crucial stake in consolidating values of citizenship and discipline, and in transforming sport into a genuine driver of human development. In the absence of such respect, the danger extends beyond isolated acts of violence to threaten trust in governing institutions such as CAF and to undermine the foundations of social cohesion, as reflected in the current state of African football.

Chmaou to TELSPORT Arabi: Violence during the Africa Cup of Nations final constitutes crimes punishable by law

Mohamed Chamaou, a lawyer and member of the Moroccan Center for Sports Law, stated in an interview with TELSPORT Arabi that the incidents witnessed during the Africa Cup of Nations final, attributed to Senegalese supporters, raise a fundamental debate about the place of law and the effectiveness of its authority within sporting environments. According to him, these acts are criminal in nature and thoroughly documented, falling under multiple punitive provisions within both domestic law and the regulatory frameworks governing international sporting events.

Chmaou emphasized that these incidents cannot be reduced to spontaneous



reactions or fleeting emotional outbursts, but rather constitute serious conduct affecting public order and requiring firm and decisive legal intervention. He explained that acts of hooliganism, attempts to storm the pitch, breaches of security barriers, acts of vandalism — including the destruction of seats — and the throwing of projectiles in the stands all amount to offenses in their own right. Such actions endanger the safety of spectators, volunteers, and stadium personnel, exposing them to immediate risk.

He further stressed that the physical assaults recorded during these events represent a clear violation of the law and cannot, under any circumstances, be justified by sporting enthusiasm or psychological pressure associated with the match. The law, he noted, does not recognize such justifications when the safety of individuals or the protection of property is at stake. Anyone found to be involved in such conduct must bear full legal responsibility.

Chmaou also pointed out that the international nature of the competition requires a heightened level of legal vigilance, as such incidents extend beyond disrupting order within the stadium and directly impact the international image of the host country. Accordingly, these events must be addressed with the seriousness they warrant, through strict enforcement of the law and the application of sanctions without hesitation or selectivity.

In the same vein, he underlined that the legal provisions governing such matters are clear and require no interpretation, whether in relation to the criminalization of violent acts or the penalties they entail. He called for a policy of zero tolerance toward such behavior, warning that any form of leniency would only encourage its recurrence and send a negative message suggesting that sporting venues can become spaces of impunity.

Chmaou concluded by affirming that law in the sporting domain is not merely a tool of repression, but a framework for regulating conduct and ensuring a balance between the freedom to support and respect for public order. He emphasized that stadiums, despite their celebratory nature, remain structured environments governed by rules that must be respected by all. Without such respect, the door is opened to disorder, undermining the very values that sport is meant to embody, foremost among them sportsmanship, tolerance, and mutual respect.



Rioting by Senegalese fans during the final of the can Morocco

Senegal.. acceptable for us forbidden for them

A few days ago, Senegalese authorities, through the Directorate General of National Security, issued an official statement announcing the launch of an investigation to identify those involved in acts of vandalism and violence that occurred around Léopold Sédar Senghor Stadium following a domestic league match.

The statement emphasized that these incidents caused significant material damage, including the destruction of shopfronts and damage to several vehicles. It also confirmed that security services had initiated procedures to arrest those involved and bring them before justice, as part of what was described as a crackdown on acts of vandalism.

However, this firm domestic stance contrasts with the position adopted by Senegalese authorities regarding individuals detained in connection with the violence that accompanied the final of the 35th Africa Cup of Nations held in Morocco.

While Senegalese police describe perpetrators of similar acts within their territory as “vandals” and seek to prosecute them, officials in Dakar have adopted a different narrative concerning those arrested in Morocco, referring to them in official and media statements as “hostages,” alongside diplomatic efforts calling for their release. This discrepancy in discourse raises serious questions about double standards, particularly since the nature of the acts involved remains similar, whether in terms of property damage or threats to public safety.

Senegal and the recurring violations of the rules



Senegalese fans are the main actors in the riot at the "Léopold Sédar Senghor" stadium

As early as 2012, Senegalese supporters had already been at the center of violent and hooligan incidents, this time in the stands of Léopold Sédar Senghor Stadium in Dakar, during the qualifiers for the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations.

Immediately after Ivorian striker Didier Drogba scored his team's second goal against Senegal, scenes of violence, vandalism, and pitch invasion erupted, driven by Senegalese supporters.

Flag burning, the throwing of projectiles at opposing players and fans, damage to stadium facilities, and attempts to assault players were all acts of destruction captured by cameras at the time.

Unable to accept the collapse of their hopes of qualifying for AFCON, Senegalese supporters engaged in acts of vandalism that forced Tunisian referee Slim Jedidi to suspend the match for approximately 40 minutes, immediately after Drogba's goal, until additional

Senegal supporters did not accept the disappearance of their dream of qualifying for the Africa Cup of Nations, and carried out acts of vandalism that led to the match being suspended for 40 minutes until additional security reinforcements arrived

security forces arrived.

Tear gas, clashes between Senegalese police and supporters inside and around the stadium—these events ultimately prevented the match from resuming, which was definitively halted in the 76th minute. The decisive first-leg result in favor of Côte d'Ivoire played a key role in the decision to terminate the match before full time, following what international media described as a "very serious" security breakdown, notably after part of the stands was set on fire by supporters.

Given the gravity of the situation, the Confederation of African Football responded swiftly to these criminal acts that nearly reduced the stadium to ashes. Just hours after the match was halted, the governing body officially awarded a 2-0 victory to Côte d'Ivoire, despite the incomplete match and the attacks on the visiting team and its supporters.

CAF also confirmed Senegal's official exclusion from the final phase of the 2013

Africa Cup of Nations.

The referee’s report justified the decision not to resume the match by citing the danger posed to the opposing team’s players and the impossibility of ensuring their safe return to the pitch.

Between the incidents of 2012 and those of 2026 at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Sports Complex in Rabat, the scenario repeated itself—albeit in a different form. The awarding of a legitimate penalty to the “Atlas Lions” was enough to reignite chaos in the stands, with direct involvement from the Senegalese team and its coach, who reportedly encouraged the players to withdraw.

Senegalese supporters stormed the stadium, taking advantage of the proximity of their stands to the pitch.

Instead of the stadium’s international standards defining the image of the final, it was the rioters who quickly reached the field and attempted to disrupt the event. They assaulted private security personnel, volunteers, and even press photographers positioned behind the goals, going as far as damaging their equipment.

The same pattern re-emerged in March 2026, this time during a domestic match in Dakar between two Senegalese teams. The Senegalese Professional Football League (LSFP) issued an urgent statement

The correct awarding of a penalty to Côte d’Ivoire was enough for chaos to return to the stands, with direct involvement from the Senegalese team and their coach, who incited the players to walk off the pitch

following the incidents of violence, hooliganism, and vandalism, strongly condemning these acts and calling for “the highest level of firmness.”

The League acknowledged that such events directly harm the image of professional football in Senegal, noting that the match had been classified as high-risk due to its sensitivity and the large attendance.

In its statement, it indirectly attributed responsibility to security authorities, stating: “Official communications were sent to the competent authorities to alert them and reinforce security arrangements, and coordination meetings were held with defense and security forces as well as administrative authorities.”

However, it stressed that these measures failed to prevent the outbreak of violence, while expressing solidarity with residents whose property was damaged.

In strong terms, the League described those responsible as “groups of troublemakers with no connection to the values of sport.”

In response to the situation, it called for urgent measures, including stricter security arrangements during matches and the launch of an investigation to determine accountability.

Among the contradictions highlighted in



Ivory Coast players are surrounded by security forces after Senegalese fans stormed the stadium



Senegalese fans set fire to the stands

the League’s response was the statement: “The safety of all stakeholders, supporters, and citizens is non-negotiable.”

In conclusion, the League called on clubs, supporters, authorities, and citizens to mobilize collectively to preserve football as a space for joy, social cohesion, and coexistence.

Institutional vigilance

The Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, and the General Directorate of National Security stated, in a joint communiqué outlining the outcomes of judicial units responsible for handling criminal cases in stadiums during the tournament, that the proportion of foreign nationals brought before these units—while reflecting the diversity of international attendance—was processed in full compliance with legal safeguards, with the assistance of simultaneous interpretation

The Senegalese Football Federation issued an urgent statement following the incident of violence, rioting, and vandalism, condemning these actions and calling for “the highest level of strictness”

services to ensure the right to defense and effective communication.

The communiqué emphasized that these judicial units ensured full respect for the legal guarantees afforded to individuals brought before them or subject to legal proceedings, in accordance with national laws and in full respect of human rights, while taking into account the nature of the event as a competition centered on enjoyment, spectacle, and fraternity. It also noted the activation of restorative justice as an initial approach, through the implementation of criminal conciliation mechanisms, reflecting a balanced approach between the requirements of deterrence and the protection of rights and freedoms.

The statement further noted that the experience of these judicial units during the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations constituted a comprehensive field-





A scene from the European Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus

based experience, demonstrating the ability of Morocco’s judicial and security systems to adapt to the situational constraints associated with major sporting events, while highlighting the effectiveness of close institutional coordination between the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, and the General Directorate of National Security. According to the communiqué, this experience represents a genuine field laboratory that enabled the testing of existing mechanisms and procedures, with a view to improving them in preparation for upcoming major sporting events, foremost among them the 2030 FIFA World Cup, which Morocco will host jointly with Spain and Portugal. The statement also pointed out that the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations constituted a major continental sporting event that required comprehensive mobilization from all

May 29, 1985, remains a date deeply etched in the memory of European fans, as no one expected the European Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus to turn into one of the darkest nights in the history of the game

institutional stakeholders, particularly components of the justice system, in order to meet organizational demands and ensure the legal security associated with the smooth conduct of the tournament, given its broad temporal and geographical scope. In anticipation of the practical challenges posed by the specific nature of such a tournament—particularly large crowds, multiple host stadiums, and the rapid pace of events within open sporting environments—and within the framework of close tripartite institutional coordination between the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, and the General Directorate of National Security, the communiqué announced the establishment of nine judicial units dedicated to handling criminal cases within stadiums hosting matches across six cities: Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Agadir, Fez, and Tangier. These units played a central role in ensuring the immediate judicial handling of offenses arising from the dynamics of the competition, in full compliance with legal provisions, while maintaining a balance between the imperatives of deterrence and the safeguarding of rights and freedoms.

The Heysel Tragedy: A Turning Point for Europe

May 29, 1985 remains deeply etched in the memory of European football fans. No one could have anticipated that the European Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus would turn into one of the darkest nights in the history of the sport. As the Heysel Stadium in Brussels prepared to host what was meant to be a grand European football celebration, tensions escalated in one of the side stands, where supporters from both teams were mixed in an inadequately separated section, according to contemporary reports. Verbal exchanges and chants quickly escalated into the throwing of projectiles. As pressure intensified, Juventus supporters attempted to retreat to safety, but the aging wall could not withstand the force of the crowd surge. Within seconds, the barrier collapsed,

causing dozens to fall amid panic and chaos. What began as clashes between supporters turned into a devastating human tragedy, resulting in 39 deaths and hundreds of injuries, most of them among Italian fans.

The stadium, which was meant to host a celebration of football, became a scene of mourning.

Investigations later revealed that the disaster was not solely the result of crowd violence, but also a consequence of serious structural and organizational failures. The stadium was in poor condition, and its infrastructure was inadequate for an event of such magnitude, despite prior warnings about safety that were not properly addressed.

Despite the tragedy, the match was played to prevent further disorder outside the stadium. Juventus won 1-0, but the victory carried little sense of triumph, overshadowed by the events that had unfolded before kickoff.

Belgian authorities launched a wide-ranging investigation targeting both supporters and officials. Several Liverpool fans were charged with manslaughter and assault, and fourteen were sentenced to prison terms. Accountability extended beyond the fans. Security and administrative officials were also held responsible, including the police chief in charge of match security and the president of the Belgian Football Association at the time. Suspended sentences were issued due to failures in organization and ticketing management.

On the sporting front, the Union of European Football Associations took a historic decision to ban English clubs from European competitions for five years, with an additional year imposed specifically

on Liverpool.

Though widely regarded as harsh at the time, the sanction reflected the scale of the shock the tragedy inflicted across Europe.

The Heysel disaster fundamentally reshaped the continent's approach to stadium safety.

Security was no longer seen as a mere formality, but as an integral component of the game's structure. The incident also led to a rethinking of stadium design and ushered in a new era of strict measures against football-related violence. Decades later, the tragedy is still commemorated each year—not only as a dark chapter in football history, but as a powerful reminder of the cost of negligence, particularly when passion meets poor organization.

The Rule of Law Above Stadium Violence

The English experience remains one of the most prominent examples of successfully enforcing the rule of law against stadium violence, transforming football venues into significantly safer environments.

During the 1970s and 1980s, organized groups of violent supporters—known as “hooligans”—emerged. These groups were linked to major clubs and operated within semi-clandestine structures referred to as “firms.”

Far from being mere supporter groups, these organizations were involved in numerous violent confrontations, both inside and outside

stadiums. Some even coordinated planned clashes, resulting in property damage and repeated acts of assault.

Following the Heysel Stadium disaster in 1985, which occurred before the European Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus,



The “hinchada” phenomenon in Latin America





Bloody riots during a football match

Margaret Thatcher's government adopted a firm approach, recognizing that stadium violence was no longer just a sporting issue, but a matter of public security requiring strict legal intervention.

In this context, a range of measures was introduced, including tougher criminal penalties for those involved in violent acts, the creation of databases identifying "high-risk" supporters, and the enactment of the Football Spectators Act in 1989.

This legislation granted courts broad powers, including the ability to impose stadium bans lasting several years, as well as travel restrictions on certain supporters during international matches, requiring them to surrender their passports ahead of fixtures.

Reforms extended beyond the legal framework to include structural changes, such as the introduction of all-seater stadiums, enhanced surveillance systems, and improved coordination between law enforcement

Although England did not adopt a single decision to dissolve "ultras" groups, its approach was based on criminalizing riot behavior itself rather than targeting the organizations

and football clubs.

The launch of the Premier League in 1992 further transformed the image of English football, with stadiums becoming more organized and secure, helping the sport regain its appeal among wider audiences, including families.

Unlike some countries, England did not pursue a policy of dissolving ultra groups outright. Instead, its approach focused on criminalizing violent behavior itself rather than targeting supporter structures.

Through arrests, prosecutions, and stadium bans, British authorities gradually dismantled hooligan networks, establishing a clear principle: the law prevails over the stands and over all forms of violence.

Today, English stadiums provide a safe environment for spectators attending domestic and European competitions, and are widely regarded as a benchmark for tackling football-related violence through the rule of law alone.



German security forces around one of the stadiums

German security stays one step ahead of stadium violence

The incident dates back to January 2025, when German authorities thwarted an attempt to trigger violence ahead of the match between Paris Saint-Germain and Stuttgart, as part of the eighth round of the UEFA Champions League league phase. German police announced the arrest of 59 French supporters in two separate operations, on suspicion of planning acts of violence and public disorder. According to security sources, those detained had traveled to Stuttgart without tickets for the match, which raised further suspicions about their intentions.

Authorities also reported that some individuals were carrying items intended to conceal their identities, suggesting a possible intent to engage in clashes. As a preventive measure, police decided to keep them in custody until the end of the match to avoid any security incidents. At the time, Deputy Police Chief Carsten Höfler stated that security forces would show zero tolerance toward any attempts to incite violence in stadiums, emphasizing that anyone coming to Stuttgart with such intentions “would be taken out of the game,” reflecting the authorities’

proactive deterrence strategy. The measures were not limited to visiting supporters. Police also imposed restrictions on 47 Stuttgart supporters suspected of planning to confront French fans, banning them from entering the city center and areas surrounding the stadium on match day.

As a result, the Stuttgart–Paris Saint-Germain fixture was not only a sporting event of significance but also took place under heightened security conditions, with authorities making it clear that there is no place for violence in the stands.



How Spain is preparing stadium security ahead of the 2030 World Cup?

Over the decades, Spanish stadiums have witnessed sporadic episodes of football-related violence. However, Spanish authorities have consistently adopted a strict legal and security approach, making the fight against stadium violence a top priority closely monitored by judicial and security institutions.

In recent months, several incidents have reignited debate over the level of security preparedness in Spanish stadiums ahead of the 2030 FIFA World Cup, which will be jointly hosted by Morocco, Portugal, and Spain.

In April 2025, Spanish National Police arrested 21 supporters linked to ultra groups associated with FC Barcelona and Real Madrid following violent incidents that occurred before the Copa del Rey final

between the two rival clubs.

Those arrested were charged with public disorder, property damage, and membership in what authorities described as a “criminal organization.” Investigations also revealed that some suspects were involved in acts of vandalism targeting sensitive locations in the city center.

The arrests included 14 individuals in Barcelona, others in Tarragona and Girona, as well as four members of the “United Family” group in Seville.

The judge overseeing the case imposed precautionary measures on several defendants, including long-term stadium bans.

Tensions did not end there. The issue of stadium violence resurfaced during a match between Real Madrid and CA Osasuna, which required

security forces to intervene to contain clashes between supporters.

The intervention drew criticism in local media, particularly due to delays in bringing the situation under control, reigniting debate over the effectiveness of security measures in Spanish stadiums.

Despite the strict measures adopted in recent years, Spanish football history remains marked by major incidents. Among the most notable are the violence of the 1980s and 1990s linked to radical ultra groups such as the “Boixos Nois,” associated with FC Barcelona supporters.

Similarly, the death of a Deportivo La Coruña supporter in 2014, during clashes with Atlético Madrid fans, remains one of the most serious incidents that led to stricter laws against stadium violence.



Senegalese fans clashing with Moroccan security forces

To address this phenomenon, Spain has implemented a strict legal and security framework, including monitoring high-risk ultra groups, installing surveillance systems in stadiums, and issuing judicial bans preventing individuals involved in violent acts from entering stadiums.

Authorities also work closely with La Liga and clubs to identify troublemakers and track their movements, significantly reducing the number of incidents compared to two decades ago.

An expert's opinion

Awad El Azouzi, a lawyer at the Rabat Bar and a specialist in disputes and sports law, told TELSPORT Arabi that stadium violence can be described as a “new old phenomenon,” given its historical roots, particularly in football. The phenomenon of hooliganism, he explains, originates in English football and has long been an integral part of British football culture. Today, it can be compared to what is broadly referred to as stadium violence, although important conceptual distinctions remain.

He noted that both terms refer to forms of violence associated with football. However, hooliganism is a more precise concept, describing a structured and historically rooted phenomenon driven by radicalized supporter groups that plan violent confrontations in advance, whether before or after matches, and sometimes even outside stadiums. In contrast, stadium violence is a broader and less clearly defined concept, encompassing spontaneous acts of violence, vandalism, and pitch invasions, often triggered by match-related incidents such as controversial refereeing decisions or irresponsible behavior. Nevertheless, he emphasized that such excesses can never justify criminal acts. In most cases, stadium violence is not premeditated, which constitutes the main distinction between the two concepts.

The sports law expert added that states facing this phenomenon seek to contain it through a combination of strict security measures and the modernization of sports infrastructure, enabling authorities to identify troublemakers and perpetrators of criminal acts.

He further stressed that the enforcement of strong criminal sanctions, supported by a comprehensive and coherent legal framework, is essential. This approach has allowed several European countries, particularly England, to effectively eliminate hooliganism from stadiums where it once thrived. However, stadium violence, as a more diffuse and spontaneous phenomenon, falls within the scope of criminal behavior that cannot be entirely eradicated. Reducing its scale, therefore, already constitutes a form of success.

El Azouzi explained that state intervention in this area reflects the exercise of sovereignty. Authorities adopt a dual approach, combining strict legal repression within the framework of criminal law with coordination with national federations and professional leagues, including measures such as holding matches behind



The phenomenon of hooliganism also extends to the streets

closed doors.

However, he argued that the use of closed-door matches is largely ineffective in addressing the phenomenon and represents more of an evasion of responsibility than a structural solution. Such measures negatively affect the football product, which has become a major economic asset, and undermine the country's image and attractiveness at the international level.

He also pointed out that international sports organizations, particularly FIFA and UEFA, now enjoy an exceptional degree of autonomy. They have become powerful economic and media actors on the global stage, to the extent that their influence sometimes rivals or even surpasses that of certain states. While it is not appropriate to equate independent sports organizations with sovereign states, this reality cannot be ignored.

He concluded by stating that "stadium violence now compels states to fully assert their sovereignty, without undermining the independence of sports organizations—an equation that some countries have successfully achieved, while others have not."

“Closed-door matches (playing behind closed doors) are an ineffective measure to curb the phenomenon and remain merely an evasion of responsibility”

When symbols and identities collide

Sports policy researcher Hamza El Koundi told TELSPORT Arabi that football, in its deepest essence, is not merely a competition defined by winning or losing, nor by the technical performance of players on the pitch. Rather, it is a complex social phenomenon that resembles, in many ways, a vast stage where collective identities intersect, where symbols and affiliations clash, and where the relationships between the individual and the group, as well as between the city and its inhabitants, are continuously reshaped.

For this very reason, the violence observed in and around stadiums cannot be reduced to momentary emotional reactions or deviant behavior by certain supporters. It must instead be understood within a broader cultural and social framework, where football becomes a space for expressing symbolic rivalries between groups.

Since the early twentieth century, as football evolved into a mass sport in major industrial cities, stadium stands gradually took on a role that went far beyond simple support for a team. They became spaces where social

and territorial identities are reproduced, where individuals identify with their club as a symbol of their neighborhood, their city, or their social class.

It is within this context that a fundamental symbolic duality emerged at the heart of football supporter culture: that of “us” versus “them.”

Thus, in the collective imagination of supporters, a match is no longer merely a sporting contest, but a test of collective prestige and a moment in which a group’s ability to defend its image against the other is put to the test.

The early roots of stadium violence

Hamza El Koundi explains that the first organized manifestations of this transformation emerged with the phenomenon of the “hinchadas” in Latin America, which predates many forms of collective violence that later appeared in Europe. In Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, from the early decades of the twentieth century, supporter groups began to form around major clubs, turning constant support for their teams into a collective way of life.

The sports policy researcher notes that these groups were not merely spontaneous gatherings, but structured social networks with their own internal rules and values. Members of the “hinchadas” saw themselves as the beating heart of the stands and their true soul, following their teams in all circumstances, in both victory and defeat. They traveled across cities and countries behind their clubs, raised large banners, and led collective chants that transformed stadiums into vibrant, festive spaces.

However, this collective expression also carried another equally important dimension, that of group honor. Within hinchada culture, a central concept emerged in Argentina known as “aguante,” referring to the ability to endure, resist, and confront. Hamza El Koundi emphasizes that “aguante” goes beyond passionate support, extending

to a willingness to defend the honor of the club and the group against opponents. In this framework, violence becomes, for some members, a means of demonstrating loyalty and courage, and even a criterion for recognition within the group itself. Supporters who prove their ability to confront others gain respect, while hesitation or fear is seen as a sign of weakness.

The Hooligan Inferno

The sports policy researcher explains that within this supporter culture, a symbolic geography of the city gradually took shape. Neighborhoods associated with a club became “owned” spaces for a given group, while those linked to rival teams were perceived as hostile territories. As a result, violence was no longer confined to stadiums, but extended to the roads leading to them and to club-affiliated neighborhoods, turning streets into arenas of symbolic confrontation between supporters.

The European experience later saw the emergence of another form of organized supporter culture, known as hooliganism in England during the 1970s and 1980s. The rise of this phenomenon was closely tied to profound social changes in British industrial cities after World War II, when football became the dominant sport of the working classes. As stadium attendance increased, groups of young supporters began forming informal associations around clubs, which quickly evolved into organized groups seeking to assert their strength against rival supporters.

Hooligan culture was marked by its openly confrontational nature. Some groups planned clashes with opposing supporters in advance, viewing such confrontations as a way to demonstrate courage and prestige. In this context, violence became a form of symbolic capital, granting status and recognition within supporter circles.

Hamza El Koundi points out that the groups



Moroccan security forces detain a Senegalese fan who invaded the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in Rabat





Senegalese fans: the black spot of Morocco's AFCON

most capable of confrontation earned the highest reputation among supporters. In this framework, groups known as “firms” emerged, linked to specific clubs such as West Ham or Millwall. These groups viewed supporter clashes as a direct extension of club rivalries, where defending the team’s honor became inseparable from the supporters’ ability to assert their presence in the public space.

The peak of stadium violence

Researcher Hamza El Koundi stated that this phenomenon reached its tragic peak with the Heysel Stadium disaster in 1985, which claimed the lives of thirty-nine supporters, followed by the Hillsborough disaster in 1989. These events prompted British authorities to fundamentally rethink stadium organization and sports security policies,

leading to a significant decline in hooliganism in England. While England was grappling with hooliganism, Italy witnessed the emergence of a completely different phenomenon, that of the “ultras.” These groups appeared in the late 1960s within a turbulent political and social context known as the “Years of Lead,” characterized by intense confrontations between radical left-wing movements and far-right organizations. These tensions were reflected in the stands, which became spaces for young people to express their collective identities and political positions.

Absolute loyalty to the club

The author of the book “Ultras in Morocco: Violence, Power, and Politics” explains that ultra culture is characterized by strict organization within the stands and by the

creation of a collective spectacle based on large flags, banners, tifos, and coordinated chants. However, the core of this culture lies in the idea of absolute loyalty to the club and in viewing the stands as a space of collective identity.

Over time, this phenomenon spread beyond Italy to reach the rest of Europe, and later North Africa and the Middle East. In these regions, ultra movements developed distinct local characteristics shaped by the social and political contexts of each city.

Stadium violence.. the product of a social and cultural structure

A researcher in sports policy argues that violence associated with football is not a temporary or incidental phenomenon, but rather the outcome of a social and cultural structure that turns the game into a mirror reflecting conflicts of identity and belonging in the contemporary city. In Latin America, “hinchadas” have become an expression of collective honor, while in England, “hooligans” have embodied class struggles within industrial cities.

The researcher concludes by noting that, despite the simplicity of its rules, football remains one of the most powerful social phenomena in revealing the tensions and aspirations for belonging and recognition within societies. It is not merely a game, but a symbolic language through which society speaks about itself, its conflicts, and its visible and invisible boundaries.

A participatory approach

Experience has shown that involving supporters’ associations in dialogue and decision-making processes helps reduce tensions and strengthens the sense of shared responsibility. Stadiums are not merely venues for watching matches, but social spaces that reflect the values of society. As such, embedding a culture of respect for the law within them has a positive impact on society as a whole.

The history of stadium violence reflects a gradual trajectory from disorder to organization, and from violence toward a pursuit of discipline.

International experience shows that the rule of law is not a secondary consideration, but a fundamental prerequisite for safeguarding sport and preserving its role as a noble human endeavor. When the law is upheld in stadiums, competition becomes a shared celebration that brings people closer together, transforming sport into a bridge for connection rather than an arena of conflict. ♦

Stars who overcame poverty and made glory



It is often assumed that athletes, especially the most prominent ones, have reached the highest level through smooth, linear paths free of mistakes, difficulties, or obstacles. The reality, however, is quite different. The journeys of many athletes reveal paths marked by adversity, with some even coming close to giving up, were it not for their unwavering determination and deep passion for sport.

Whether it is Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Rivaldo, or other iconic figures, their ability to overcome challenges and achieve their goals goes far beyond their performances on the field and deserves recognition equal to the magnitude of their journeys.



Lionel Messi..

Overcoming a Congenital Fragility

Argentine star Lionel Messi did not experience a typical childhood. He faced a particularly sensitive health condition caused by a growth hormone deficiency, a disorder that directly affects bone development and, consequently, height. This posed a real threat to his career before it had even begun, requiring costly treatment that his family, with limited means, could not afford.

Messi's destiny, as we know it today, was far from guaranteed. His move to FC Barcelona marked a decisive turning point, as the club took charge of his treatment for several years after recognizing his extraordinary talent. In football terms, Barcelona identified a rare potential and invested in his development by providing him with the necessary care.

Fortunately for football and its fans, the outcome was not merely the recovery of a player, but the emergence of an athlete who redefined the standards of physical performance in the game. His modest stature, far from being a disadvantage, became a strength, giving him exceptional balance and ball control.

This has been evident throughout his long-standing performances with Barcelona and, more recently, during his time in



Lionel Messi

Miami.

His triumph at the 2022 FIFA World Cup with Argentina, along with his multiple Ballon d'Or awards, cements his status

as a truly exceptional player and offers a powerful example to anyone facing challenges, regardless of their nature, who aspires to reach the top.

Rivaldo..

A star born without a smile

Rivaldo's story is a powerful source of inspiration, particularly for those who view poverty as a major barrier to their sporting ambitions. This exceptional global star grew up in extreme poverty, to the point of suffering from a severe vitamin D deficiency that significantly affected his bone development, particularly his teeth. Rivaldo lost his teeth at an early age, which greatly impacted his

beginnings. But that was not all: the young Brazilian, physically frail, had to work as a street vendor from a very young age to help support his family, earning a meager income. After his father's death, his situation became even harsher, as he took on family responsibilities while still a teenager. Moreover, Rivaldo would walk long distances to attend training sessions, facing numerous obstacles, including rejection from coaches who considered him "too thin" to succeed. For many,

a lack of physical strength is a major barrier to a sporting career. Yet those who defy this logic, like Rivaldo, never give up. How did his journey end? Rivaldo went on to win the 2002 FIFA World Cup alongside legendary Brazilian players such as Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos, Ronaldinho, and Cafu. He also won the Ballon d'Or, in recognition of his outstanding performances, particularly during his time at FC Barcelona.



Rivaldo



Cristiano Ronaldo

Cristiano Ronaldo.. A Heart Put to the Test

At the age of fifteen, Cristiano Ronaldo was diagnosed with tachycardia, a heart condition potentially incompatible with a high-level sporting career. The young Portuguese player already aspired to become a major figure in football, in a difficult personal context marked by the loss of his father in 2005 due to alcohol-related issues, leaving behind a challenging social and psychological situation.

This condition could have ended any sporting ambition had it not been treated

with precision. Ronaldo underwent catheter ablation, a well-established medical procedure for treating heart rhythm disorders, and returned to training with remarkable speed. Two key factors drove this comeback: exceptional physical abilities and boundless ambition.

Like many renowned athletes, Ronaldo faced multiple challenges early in his career—health-related, social, and psychological. Yet his ambition and relentless drive for

excellence enabled him to overcome them all.

It was not surgery that built the Ronaldo legend, but rather his extraordinary discipline, which has become a benchmark and has endured even beyond his forties.

Today, Ronaldo stands as an inspiring model, having shaped his body according to rigorous scientific standards in training and nutrition. From a fragile teenager, he rose to become one of the greatest goal scorers in football history.

THEIR JOURNEYS READ LIKE AN OPEN BOOK

The stories of these stars, among many others, form an open book from which young people can draw inspiration, especially at a time when life's challenges seem more numerous and demanding. Sport is, above all, a discipline built on daily effort, consistent training, personal development, and the continuous improvement of one's abilities.

Those who learn to embrace this effort, grow accustomed to it, and turn it into a source of progress will find other life challenges far easier to overcome.

In this sense, athletes are true open schools, offering valuable lessons in perseverance for reaching the highest levels—not only in sport, but in life itself. ♦

Hicham El Guerrouj..

A graduate of the «school of failure»



Hicham El Guerrouj

Management experts often say that “failure should be thanked, for it is the greatest teacher for those who aspire to reach the top.” This is precisely what Hicham El Guerrouj experienced. He fell during the 1500-meter final at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, and then missed out on gold again four years later at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. He ultimately took his revenge at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, winning two gold medals, entering Olympic history through the front door and proving that “failure is the school of geniuses.” A long and demanding journey, marked by both setbacks and triumphs, whose outcome was truly exemplary and worthy of being told—and taken as a model.

The Fall of Atlanta and the Tears

For many years, Hicham El Guerrouj kept, in his room at the National Institute of Athletics in Rabat, a photograph of himself in tears after his famous fall in the 1500-meter final at Atlanta in 1996. He carried it with him as a constant reminder, keeping the flame of failure alive within him, training harder in order to take his revenge and win the gold medal that had slipped away due to a simple misstep at a decisive moment.

Thus, that brutal and entirely unexpected fall became El Guerrouj’s first true “school” on the road to greatness. It strengthened his ambition and intensified his desire to win, pushing him to train with even greater sacrifice and patience, determined to break the Olympic jinx that seemed to haunt him.

The first results soon followed. On



El Guerrouj during the Athens 2004 Olympics

The Fall of Sydney and the Anger

As the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games approached, El Guerrouj was preparing to represent Morocco alongside a generation of outstanding athletes, including Ali Ezzine, Salah Hissou, Nezha Bidouane, and Brahim Lahlafi. By then, expectations had completely shifted. He had matured, won a world title, excelled on the international circuit, and dethroned Morceli. Olympic gold seemed inevitable. But the reality of elite competition proved otherwise. The weight of decisive moments, the trauma of Atlanta, the countless kilometers run in harsh conditions at the Ifrane training center, and the sacrifices made—distance from family and giving up personal comforts—once again led him to a painful setback. Entering the final as the favorite, he left it deeply shaken, after the unexpected victory of Kenyan runner Noah Ngeny in 3:32.07.

Once again, El Guerrouj was overwhelmed by disappointment. Yet his close circle—his coach and friend Abdelkader Kada, and his training partner Houssine Benzrikat—helped him rise again. They reminded him that his time would come, and that these falls were lessons meant to guide him, strengthen him, and show him where he needed to improve. Above all, he remained a great champion, and his Olympic gold was waiting for him—somewhere, at the right moment. ♦



September 7, 1996, at the Milan meeting, El Guerrouj defeated his Algerian rival Noureddine Morceli, winning the 1500 meters in 3:38.80. He drew strength from the words of the late King Hassan II, who had told him after his fall that he considered him a champion and that he should act accordingly.

At that precise moment, El Guerrouj demonstrated that transforming failure into a driving force is the true fuel for those who aim for the top. More importantly, he conceived a bold and innovative idea for Moroccan athletics: to replicate the achievement of the Polish legend Zatopek by targeting a double Olympic gold. He shared this ambition with his coach Abdelkader Kada, expressing his desire to take on this challenge.

The Fall of Athens.. That Never Happened

Before heading to Athens in 2004, El Guerrouj had established himself as the undisputed king of the 1500 meters worldwide, both indoors and outdoors. He dominated world championships and shone in international competitions. Yet once again, failure seemed ready to catch up with him. A month before the Olympics, he lost a preparatory race in Rome, falling into deep doubt.

At the time, the French newspaper

L'Équipe ran the headline: "The Beginning of the End for El Guerrouj." He responded firmly, explaining that his performance was affected by breathing issues due to allergies, and that it would not impact his Olympic ambitions, which he viewed as a matter of life and death.

On August 24, 2004, El Guerrouj proved all predictions wrong. In the final stretch, his American rival of Kenyan origin, Bernard Lagat, overtook him and seemed on the verge of victory. But El Guerrouj found an unknown inner strength and surged ahead once more. "I told myself, no, not this time, no one will pass me," he later said. Lagat admitted that once El Guerrouj came back, it was impossible to catch him again.

Fittingly, the first to embrace him in celebration was Lagat himself—his closest friend, fiercest rival, and greatest competitor—who acknowledged him as the undisputed master of the 1500 meters. This moment encapsulated El Guerrouj's long journey through the "school of failure," from which he emerged as an emperor of the discipline.

To crown his achievement, he went on to win a second gold medal days later in the 5000 meters final, defeating, among others, Ethiopia's Kenenisa Bekele.

Those who face failure time and again ultimately rise above it.



With an outstanding performance, Morocco's U17 national team was crowned champions of the North African Tournament, held in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, achieving a perfect tally of 12 points. The young Lions dominated the competition from the outset, displaying strong collective football that reflected great team cohesion and high fighting spirit on the pitch. This title confirms the value of grassroots work in national football and the emergence of a promising generation capable of continuing to win trophies.





Ouahbi Tests and Delivers..

Atlas Lions in a New Dynamic

Moroccan fans closely followed, with keen interest and anticipation, the national team's first appearance under head coach Mohamed Ouahbi during the March international break. This period provided a valuable opportunity to glimpse the contours of the new phase led by the technical staff.

Ouahbi made full use of the FIFA international window by organizing two friendly matches: the first against Ecuador in Madrid and the second against Paraguay in Lens. These fixtures formed part of a broader preparation plan aimed at assessing player fitness and testing a range of tactical and technical options. One of the key takeaways from these matches was the integration of several new players who earned their first call-ups, alongside experienced core members of the squad. The objective was to strike a balance within the team and lay the foundations of a competitive unit capable of meeting upcoming challenges. This phase also highlighted the potential of young talents eager to establish themselves in the senior team, following their impressive performances under Ouahbi at the U20 World Cup in Chile.

These steps fall within early preparations for upcoming competitions, particularly the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with the ambition of building a strong, cohesive, and competitive team capable of sustaining Morocco's recent positive momentum.

RESPECT FOR «LOGIC» IN WAHBI'S FIRST LIST

Ouahbi's first squad list clearly reflected an approach grounded in form and merit, as widely noted by observers across various platforms.

The technical staff sought to maintain a balance between experienced players and emerging profiles, while providing opportunities to promising young talents who have delivered standout performances, in line with a vision aimed at building a cohesive, structured, and progressively evolving team.

This approach was reflected in the return of players who have regained their best form, such as goalkeeper Mehdi Benabid, along with Chadi Riad and Soufiane Kourouani, as well as the inclusion of U20 world champions, highlighting a clear intent to inject fresh energy into the squad.

Moreover, Ouahbi did not hesitate to call up in-form players such as Mohamed Rabii Hrimat, based on their club performances, reaffirming that on-field performance remains the decisive selection criterion, as he emphasized during the squad announcement.

At the same time, the squad conveyed clear messages regarding competitive standards, particularly through the omission of certain players, including Hakim Ziyech. The head coach clarified that his selections were based on a rigorous assessment of physical readiness and competitive level, while stressing that the national team remains open



A scene from the match between Morocco and Ecuador

to all. Issa Diop's case, meanwhile, reflected an approach centered on openness and reconciliation, after the player expressed his willingness to represent Morocco—a move that was positively received by the technical staff. Overall, Ouahbi's first squad reflects a pragmatic vision that prioritizes the interests of the national team above all else, laying the groundwork for a new phase built on competition, discipline, and merit-based



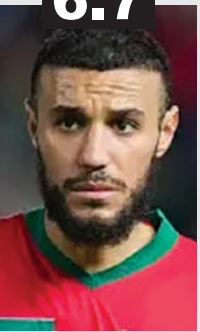
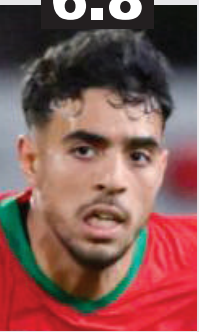


opportunities, with the aim of forming a strong squad capable of meeting future challenges, foremost among them the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

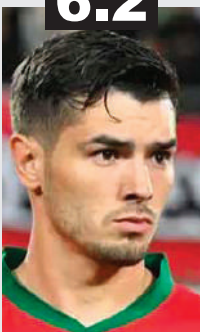
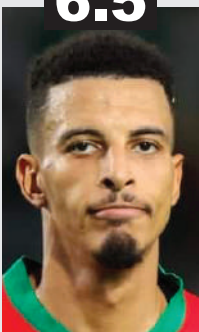

What conclusions can be drawn from the first outing against Ecuador?

In the friendly match against Ecuador, played on March 27 at the Metropolitano Stadium, head coach Mohamed Ouahbi fielded the following lineup:


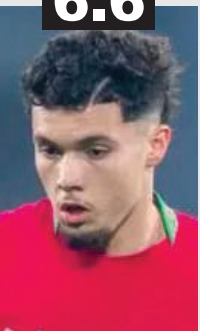

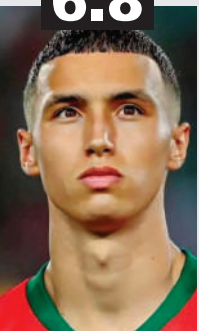


Yassine Bono – Achraf Hakimi – Chadi Riad – Issa Diop – Noussair Mazraoui – Mohamed Rabii Hrimat – Naïl El Aynaoui – Ismael Saibari – Azzedine Ounahi – Brahim Diaz – Abdessamad Ezzalzouli.

According to SofaScore, a platform specializing in player statistics and ratings, Naïl El Aynaoui was named Man of the Match for Morocco in the friendly encounter, which ended in a 1–1 draw, with a rating of 8.1. The remaining players were rated as follows:

6.4  Rabii Hrimat	6.9  Achraf Hakimi	6.7  Noussair Mazraoui	6.8  Chadi Riad	6.6  Issa Diop	6.3  Yassine Bono
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6.8  Ismael Saibari	6.2  Brahim Diaz	6.5  Azzedine Ounahi	7.0  Abdessamad Ezzalzouli	8.1  Naïl El Aynaoui
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Ratings of substitute players in the Ecuador match

6.8  Anass Salah-Eddine	6.6  Samir El Morabit	6.4  Chamseddine Talbi	6.8  Bital El Khannous	It didn't drip  Yasser Jassim	6.5  Soufiane Rahimi
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A DIFFERENT TEST AGAINST PARAGUAY

The Atlas Lions secured a 2-1 victory over Paraguay in their second friendly match during the March international break.

Ouahbi retained four players from the previous match: goalkeeper Yassine Bono, Issa Diop, as well as Achraf

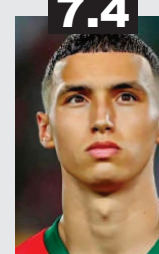
Hakimi and Naïl El Aynaoui.

The full lineup was as follows:

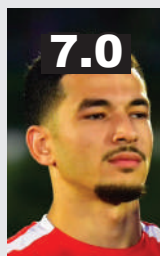
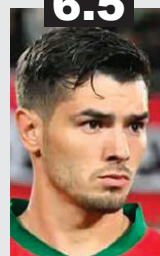
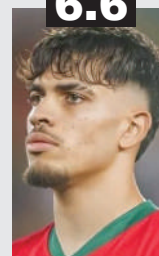

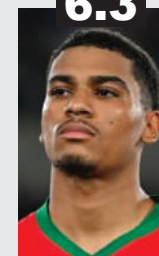
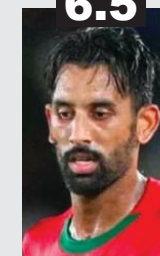
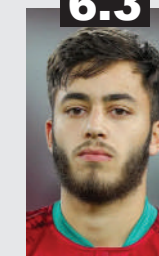
Yassine Bono / Achraf Hakimi / Issa Diop / Chamseddine Talbi / Soufiane Rahimi / Naïl El Aynaoui / Yasser Jassim / Bilal El Khannous / Samir El Morabit / Anass Salah-Eddine / Redouane Halhal.

Player rating

In the match against Paraguay, Yassine Bono was named Man of the Match in the game played in Lens. He received the highest rating (8.7) according to SofaScore. The other players, both starters and substitutes, were rated as follows:

6.7  Chamseddine Talbi	7.7  Achraf Hakimi	7.2  Samir El Morabit	6.7  Anass Salah-Eddine	6.8  Issa Diop	8.7  Yassine Bono
7.1  Redouane Halhal	6.6  Yassine Jassim	7.4  Bilal El Khannous	6.7  Soufiane Rahimi	7.3  Naïl El Aynaoui	

Ratings of substitute players in the Paraguay match

7.0  Zakaria El Ouahdi	6.5  Brahim Diaz	6.6  Abdessamad Ezzalzouli	6.7  Ayoub El Kaabi	6.3  Amine Adli	6.5  Rabii Hrimat	6.3  Soufiane Kourouani
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MOROCCO'S READINESS FOR THE 2026 WORLD CUP

Following the matches against Ecuador and Paraguay, Ouahbi stated that the technical staff deliberately made several changes to the starting lineup in the second match while retaining certain key players, in order to facilitate the integration of young talents

and strengthen team cohesion. He also emphasized the importance of maintaining balance within the squad and giving playing time to as many players as possible to assess their readiness ahead of the global tournament. Ouahbi was thus able to

monitor several young players who earned their first senior call-ups, noting that the March training camp represents the final stage before announcing the official squad for the World Cup. Morocco will compete in a group alongside Brazil, Haiti, and Scotland. ♦

Turabi to "TELSPORT Arabic": Tankusdo University's budget does not match its results



He stated that the budget allocated to the Federation does not match the scale of its ambitions and the results achieved at both the national and international levels.

Tangsudo in Morocco is currently experiencing a remarkable phase of growth, reflecting a new dynamic in the development of this martial art, which is increasingly establishing itself on both the continental and international stages. This progress is not coincidental, but rather the result of long-term, structured work encompassing training, supervision, and openness to international experiences, which has enabled the emergence of a new generation of champions capable of raising Morocco's flag high across various competitions.

In this context, the Moroccan national Tangsudo team won the African Cup after an outstanding performance at the senior African Championship held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, on July 27. Moroccan athletes secured a total of 19 medals, including 15 gold, one silver, and 3 bronze, a record that clearly reflects Morocco's dominance in this continental competition.

This achievement highlights the scale of the work carried out by the technical and administrative staff, who have invested in developing high-level athletes capable of competing across different categories. It also reflects the progress made in infrastructure dedicated to this discipline and the growing number of practitioners nationwide, which has broadened the talent pool and revealed promising prospects.

This success was not limited to results alone, but was also evident in the technical quality and tactical discipline displayed by the athletes throughout the bouts. They demonstrated a high level of professionalism and physical readiness, enabling them to outperform competitors from well-established Tangsudo schools.

Observers agree that this title represents a real turning point for the discipline in Morocco, strengthening the Kingdom's position as an emerging force in this field at the African level. It also opens new opportunities for Moroccan athletes to participate in international competitions and represent the country in world championships with greater ambition.



Nouredine Turabi during one of the training sessions

The Royal Moroccan Taekwondo Federation seeks to implement a comprehensive and ambitious strategy in the coming phase, aimed at consolidating the position of this sport at both the national and continental levels

This achievement is expected to give new momentum to the Royal Moroccan Tangsudo Federation in continuing its development efforts, whether through organizing national and international events or supporting clubs and training centers, thereby ensuring the sustainability of this positive dynamic. It is also likely to attract more young people to practice Tangsudo, particularly due to the educational values it promotes, such as respect for opponents, discipline, and self-control, in addition to the development of physical and mental abilities.

To shed light on this discipline, the challenges it faces in Morocco, and the Federation's future projects, TELSPORT Arabi conducted an interview with the President of the Royal Moroccan Tangsudo Federation, Nouredine Tourabi.

What are the main objectives your Federation seeks to implement following this success at the African Cup?



The Royal Moroccan Tangsudo Federation is working to establish a comprehensive and ambitious strategy for the coming phase, aimed at consolidating the position of this discipline at both the national and continental levels, while sustaining the positive momentum observed in recent years. These objectives are part of an integrated vision combining training, competition, and institutional structuring. Among the top priorities is the optimal preparation for continental events, particularly the fourth edition of the African Tangsudo Cup, with the aim of retaining the title won for the third time in 2025 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Retaining the title serves as a driving force to intensify technical work through the regular organization of training camps and the enhancement of national athletes' readiness, ensuring a strong presence at the African level and paving the way for greater competitiveness internationally. The Federation also places particular emphasis on expanding the base of practitioners by increasing participation

Retaining the title serves as a motivation to continue intensive technical work through the scheduling of regular training camps and to enhance the readiness of the national players

across the country, notably through supporting clubs and regional leagues and encouraging the involvement of new categories, especially youth and women, in order to strengthen the spread and sustainability of this discipline.

On the organizational and technical levels, the Federation is committed to improving its performance by modernizing its management mechanisms and enhancing the quality of training and supervision for both coaches and referees. In this regard, the project to establish a national academy dedicated to Tangsudo represents a strategic step aimed at training a new generation of champions according to professional standards and providing a suitable environment for talent development.

How do you assess the level of development of this discipline at the national level?

In our assessment of the development of Tangsudo across the Kingdom, it can be stated that this discipline is experiencing significant and continuous



Turabi with the Moroccan Taekwondo national team players

growth at all levels. The number of male and female practitioners is increasing substantially each year, alongside a clear improvement in their technical and physical levels, reflecting the effectiveness of the efforts made in training and supervision.

This progress is also reflected in the growing number of clubs and sports associations affiliated with various regional leagues, contributing to the expansion of the discipline nationwide.

Regarding efforts to broaden the base of practitioners across different regions, the Federation adopts a proximity-based strategy through organizing awareness meetings, training sessions, and diverse sporting activities targeting all age groups.

These initiatives aim to promote Tangsudo and encourage young people to practice it, particularly in areas where the discipline remains less developed. At the same time, efforts are being made to support regional leagues by providing them with the necessary resources to develop their activities, while encouraging local partnerships, ensuring the continuity of this momentum and strengthening Tangsudo's presence as an emerging discipline within the national sports landscape.

How are talents identified and developed to produce champions?

Within the Royal Moroccan Tangsudo Federation, we rely on a set of integrated programs and strategies to identify and develop young talents, ensuring sustained performance and building a solid base of champions capable of representing Morocco at both continental and international levels.

In this framework, top talents are selected during major national competitions such as the Throne Cup and the Prince Moulay El Hassan Cup, as well as other national championships. The national technical committee is



From one of the Taekwondo training sessions



Turabi with Taekwondo coaches

responsible for identifying the most promising talents and evaluating their technical and physical abilities in order to integrate them into the national teams across different categories and styles. In this context, the Federation places great importance on organizing regular training camps for national team members, focusing on improving technical and tactical aspects, as well as physical and mental preparation, in order to enhance athletes' readiness for upcoming competitions. Additionally, the Federation ensures continuous training for coaches, referees, and its technical staff through training sessions and workshops designed to keep pace with the latest internationally recognized methodologies in this discipline. This approach contributes to improving the quality of coaching within clubs and creating a professional environment conducive to early talent identification and structured development.

International participation greatly contributes to raising the level of Moroccan practitioners of Taekwondo, as it gives them the opportunity for direct exposure to different schools and techniques

What impact do international competitions have on athletes' performance?

International participation plays a significant role in enhancing the level of Moroccan Tangsudo practitioners, as it provides them with direct exposure to different schools and techniques, while enabling them to gain new experience that strengthens their competitive readiness. Competing in continental and international championships is not limited to achieving results; it also serves as a key opportunity to assess performance levels, correct shortcomings, and improve both individual and collective performance. This openness to the international environment has had a positive impact on the performance of national athletes, who have become more capable of adapting to different styles of play and more mature in managing bouts under pressure. It has also

contributed to boosting athletes' self-confidence, reinforcing their competitive spirit and discipline, while enhancing Morocco's image as an emerging force in Tangsudo—an achievement reflected in its leading position at the African level.

What are the main challenges facing the development of this discipline?

We face a number of major challenges in the development of this discipline, both in terms of coaching structures, infrastructure, and financial support.

Among the key priorities is the need to establish a national academy specialized in Tangsudo, covering its various forms and styles, in order to ensure a scientific and professional training framework for the emerging generations. Continuous training for coaches, referees, and technical staff within associations and regional leagues also represents a central challenge, given the need to keep pace with modern technical developments and to enhance the quality of coaching within clubs. Furthermore, the limited budget allocated to the Federation constitutes a major constraint, as it does not match the scale of ambitions or the results achieved at both national and international levels.

These constraints are further exacerbated by the growing need to strengthen financial support, particularly in light of the Federation's orientation toward organizing continental and international events in Morocco. Such ambitions require substantial logistical and organizational resources to ensure the

success of these events and to enhance the sport's visibility both nationally and internationally.

You mentioned Morocco's organization of continental events in Tangsudo. Is this a key strategic priority for the future?

For us, Morocco's organization of continental and international Tangsudo events represents a major strategic priority, aimed at consolidating the Kingdom's position as an African and international sports hub in this emerging discipline.

Hosting such events not only contributes to Morocco's visibility, but also provides a valuable opportunity for direct engagement with world-class practitioners, while strengthening technical and organizational standards at the national level.

In this regard, we are also working to enhance cooperation with the Ministry of National Education, Preschool and Sports, as well as with the Royal Moroccan School Sports Federation, with the aim of promoting the development of Tangsudo within the school system.

Among the key ambitions we are committed to achieving are hosting the fourth edition of the African Championship in

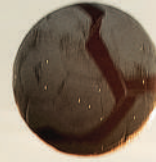
Morocco, organizing an international competition under the auspices of the international federation, and intensifying national and international training camps across various regional leagues, in order to sustain the momentum of development and openness. ♦



Turabi with Taekwondo youth trainees

اللى عندو خاصو ديما يلمع.

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