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Bulgarian soccer coach banned 4 years for giving players steroids before matches

By The Associated Press (CP) – 5 days ago

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — A Bulgarian soccer coach must serve a four-year ban for giving his players pills containing an anabolic steroid before matches in Cyprus.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport upheld appeals by FIFA and the World Anti-Doping Agency that Edward Eranosian's suspension should be doubled after a Cypriot Football Association inquiry ordered a two-year sanction. Eranosian is banned until April 2013.

The former Bulgaria international "organized the systematic distribution" of pills containing oxymesterone to APOP Kinyras players one hour before matches, the court said in a ruling published Tuesday.

A CAS panel of three lawyers said players Carlos Marques and Lionel Medeiros should serve just one-year bans for failing doping tests because they identified Eranosian as the supplier.

WADA had asked for the pair, and five other players who took Eranosian's pills but were not charged, to be banned for two years but its request was dismissed.

CAS said no proof existed that the five took pills containing the steroid. They were represented at a June hearing by Howard Jacobs, an American lawyer specializing in doping cases.

Investigations began when APOP Kinyras' Portuguese players Marques and Medeiros tested positive for oxymesterone after domestic matches in October and November 2008.

They told a Cypriot FA official that Eranosian openly offered white or brown-coloured pills before matches to players in his starting lineup.

Eranosian obtained the pills in Bulgaria and told his team they were supplements containing caffeine and vitamins, the ruling said.

WADA demanded the maximum four-year ban allowed by FIFA rules for "administration of a prohibited substance," and because Eranosian refused to name his supplier.

The court banned the 49-year-old coach through April 1, 2013, and ordered him to pay 10,000 Swiss francs (C\$10,432) to WADA for its legal costs.

Marques and Medeiros have since served their bans and CAS credited them for co-operating with Cypriot soccer authorities.

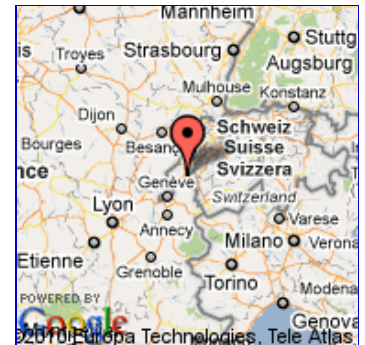
The court dismissed WADA's appeal to sanction their teammates, and ordered the global doping watchdog to pay 1,000 Swiss francs (C\$1,043) each to the Cypriot FA and all the players involved in the case.

"Indeed some players took the pills, were subsequently tested and there was no adverse analytical finding," the court noted.

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