

CSKA Fans' Racist Chants Leave UEFA Red-Faced

By [The Moscow Times](#)

October 24, 2013



CSKA Moscow fans support their team during its match against Manchester City at Khimki Arena on Wednesday. **Maxim Shemetov**

LONDON — Racist chants from CSKA Moscow fans enraged Manchester City's Ivorian international Yaya Toure during the teams' group stage Champions League football match at Khimki Arena on Wednesday and drew heavy criticism from players and media. CSKA later denied that any taunts occurred, despite widespread reports of the incidents.

The Moscow club's deputy media manager Michael Sanadze told Sky Sports News, "There is no subject to discuss. Nothing special happened," adding, "There was a lot of noise in the stadium. Nobody else, other than Yaya Toure, heard anything."

The midfielder complained to Romanian referee Ovidiu Hategan about Russian fans making monkey chants during the second half of Wednesday's game. Manchester City is expected to file an official complaint to the Union of European Football Associations.

The chants were particularly embarrassing for UEFA, who had declared this week "Football Against Racism in Europe Action Week" and responded by issuing a short statement saying they were "waiting for the report from match officials" on Thursday.

However, despite all captains wearing anti-racism armbands during this round of fixtures and the exchanging of pennants declaring "No To Racism" and "Respect," the message appeared to have been lost on some CSKA Moscow fans.

Thursday's Daily Mirror headline echoed Toure's post-match comments, proclaiming "Shut Them Down" after the midfielder called on European soccer's governing body to close the stadium perhaps for "a couple of years" until the problem is eradicated.

The Daily Telegraph said the racism issue was particularly worrying because Russia were hosting the World Cup in 2018.

The Times observed that Toure knew exactly what was being chanted at him as he was a fluent Russian speaker following his time playing in Ukraine.

Injured Manchester City captain Vincent Kompany offered support for his teammate when he issued a plea to UEFA and the Russian government.

"Racist chanting again in Moscow today. We've all said enough. @UEFA.com, @GovernmentRF, CSKA all eyes are on you now.. #StopRacism," he tweeted.

The Times commented: "UEFA must finally make a stand against the bigots. Last night showed 'Action Week' for the joke it is," adding, "The UEFA Congress adopted an 11-point anti-racism resolution in May and has made smug videos to illustrate how hard it is working, but no-one fears UEFA sanctions because time and time again racist incidents have been ignored and downplayed."

The lack of an immediate response was fairly typical for UEFA, who have merely paid lip service to the problem in the past by imposing paltry fines for racism at matches under their jurisdiction.

On Wednesday, UEFA even reduced a punishment against serial offenders Lazio following another racist incident in the Europa League against Legia Warsaw last month.

Toure said after the game, which City won 2-1 to put them in sight of a place in the Champions League's last 16, "I am not just disappointed. I am furious about what those fans have done, and UEFA has to take some action because players with the same color of skin will always be in the same position."

"As captain, I was wearing an armband which says "no to racism," and I want to see UEFA do something. We have to be as strong as possible otherwise they will continue like that. Maybe they could ban the stadium, I don't know, for a couple of years or a couple of months."

Manchester City coach Manuel Pellegrini added: "There were some shouts against our player. It is a pity that they keep doing such stupid things. It is a pity for Yaya and a pity for the city, but I hope the right message can be put out."

CSKA are playing at the Khimki Arena while the Luzhniki Stadium, their regular home, is being rebuilt ahead of the World Cup.

In the event, although Serbian attacker Zoran Tasic gave CSKA the lead, Argentinian striker Sergio Aguero scored twice before halftime to put City ahead, and they stayed firm in the second half to take all three points.

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