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Zenit Handed Stadium Ban After Fan Attacks Player

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Zenit St. Petersburg has been handed a two-game stadium ban for next season over an incident in which fans stormed the pitch, one of them attacking an opposition player.

Dynamo Moscow defender Vladimir Granat was treated for a head injury after a fan punched him during the pitch invasion, which forced the Russian Premier League game to be abandoned.

The Russian Football Union's disciplinary committee handed Dynamo a 3-0 win, in a game which they had been leading 4-2 before fans took to the field.

Zenit's first two home games of next season will be played behind closed doors and the area of the Petrovsky stadium where Zenit's hardcore fans sit will be closed for a further three matches. The club was also fined 1 million rubles ($28,800).

The sanctions are similar to Zenit's punishment in 2012 when a pyrotechnic device thrown by one of its fans exploded near Dynamo goalkeeper Anton Shunin, leaving him with an eye

injury. On that occasion, a two-match stadium ban was also issued.

Zenit's general director Maxim Mitrofanov said in a statement that Wednesday's ruling was "tough" and said the club was reforming its security.

"The club, together with the police and the city, is now drawing up a range of measures, both of a legal and organizational nature, dedicated to never again allowing unlawful and illegal acts by fans at the stadium," he said.

When the fan who struck Granat is tracked down, the club will try to force him to pay some of the club's fine, Mitrofanov added.

Mitrofanov was given a formal warning earlier Monday by St. Petersburg prosecutors, who said that the number of security staff at the game — 260 for a crowd of 19,000 — was criminally low. If improvements are not made soon, further legal action will likely be taken against the club.

Zenit sits second in the league and will become Russian champions for the fourth time with a win over FC Kuban on Thursday if CSKA Moscow fails to beat Lokomotiv Moscow.

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