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FC Porto Blocked Russians From Watching FC Krasnodar Victory, TV Channel Says

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FC Krasnodar

Update: FC Porto and Match TV have traded accusations over the incident. Comments added below.

Football fans in Russia were abruptly blocked from watching FC Krasnodar spring a major upset against FC Porto Tuesday after the Portuguese side reportedly spiked the price for broadcasting rights before the game, Russia's Match TV sports broadcaster has alleged.

The Russian side secured a 3-2 victory against the Portuguese side in Porto on Tuesday, advancing to the third round of qualifiers in the UEFA Champions League on away goals after losing the home leg 0-1.

Match TV, which was scheduled to broadcast the match in Russia, faced a social media storm from fans when it announced that the broadcast was canceled "for reasons beyond our

control," minutes before kickoff.

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"Television rights to this match belong directly to Porto," the channel said in an announcement during the game on Tuesday.

"Despite agreeing to all terms and having a signed contract, Porto changed the terms 1.5 hours before the game and refused to provide access to the match signal," it said in a statement.

Commentators alleged that Porto had attempted to charge Match TV at least double the original price.

Porto's director of communications Fransisco Moraes denied the allegations Wednesday, saying that Match TV had failed to pay for the broadcast by the agreed deadline — 90 minutes before kickoff — prompting Porto to cut off the signal.

"It's a lie that we changed the agreement," he said in comments to Championat.com. He added that Match TV was misleading its Russian audience and had itself broken the agreement by not making the payment.

Later on Wednesday, Match TV released what it said was evidence that Porto had broken the agreement. It attached scans of a document in which the payment deadline is listed as September 1.

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> В связи с большим количеством информации, слухов и домыслов относительно сорванной трансляции игры между «Порту» и «Краснодаром» креативный директор Матч ТВ Гавриил Гордеев выступил с официальным заявлением:https://t.co/QFEhXA2CkE pic.twitter.com/e1Z6KtTdN7
>
> — Матч ТВ (@MatchTV) August 14, 2019

"There was no clause about a deadline for mandatory payment 1.5 hours before the beginning of the match in the contract," Match TV's creative director Gavriil Gordeev said.

Gordeev earlier said that Match TV was considering legal action against Porto over the incident.

"In any case, there must be penalties [for Porto]," he said in an interview to the state-run TASS news agency.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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