

RACISM: This never-ending issue haunting Vinicius

By: Lemay Padrón Oliveros / Special for CubaSi
26/05/2023



Few months ago, we talked about the hostile environment the Brazilian forward was living within Spanish soccer stadiums. Except for Real Madrid's headquarter, there a just a few stadiums where the forward may play normally, as it happens with the rest of his professional players worldwide.

The growing number of verbal attacks he has to endure, which he himself fuels with his behavior, makes him live every match in a sort of hurricane where nothing good sprouts.

We said that it was negative for him to give in to provocations as he gets lost in the game, then he starts complaining to referees, and he even challenges rival's fans, which is unforgivable. The truth is that hatred messages are already part of the daily life there, little or too much, but it always happens and that's just disappointing.

On Sunday, Spain witnessed another disappointing episode of this shameful story. The Brazilian got the red card against Valencia FC. But let's go back to the very beginning. No one talks today about the important win achieved by the locals, and that is bad for them, LaLiga and Spain.

Firstly, Vinicius is a player who needs adrenaline to get his best performance. But rivals know he falls on provocation easily and this is the path they have found to derail him from his best performance.

The verbal attacks did not start with the game, they started from Real Madrid's entrance to the stadium, and somehow the player looked defenseless because nothing happened and that irritated him.

The fans also know it. And when he gets a call by the referee contrary to what he believes (something he must grow up), insults pour from the stands.

That is nothing new and it does not happen only to him and I believe it will be happening for a long time. But when racist insults are uttered, things are really bad. In Mestalla, Vini Jr managed to identify a person who yelled "monkey" at him and insisted that individual must be taken out of the stadium. The situation lasted several minutes and then we learned that the Brazilian forward wanted to leave the game, but his coach asked him to stay.

Afterwards, goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois said he saw his teammate angry and confirmed he would have abandoned the game if Vini Jr. would have decided to leave to the locker room. But I do not know if something so drastic could be the solution. The truth is this situation

replicates in every stadium, and the chain always breaks by the weakest link.

Minutes later, a brawl starts and Vini got the red card after punching Hugo Duro, but the cameras showed how the Spaniard held Vini by the neck for several seconds, which triggered the reaction of the Brazilian. It is a never-ending issue. Do we punish the cause of the problems or the one who reacts against the problem? So far, the latter is the one affected.

I still think that referees have the solution at hand. Their main goal is to protect football players. If they hard fouls are punished properly, players do not react in consequence. Vini has to work on his self-control, but you have to put yourself in his shoes from time to time. Let's not forget that he is a 22-year-old boy.

He cannot be the target of some angry fans because of the color of his skin or race. Clubs must take actions because it is being normalized something that it is not right. He must be respected as he is a human being.

Otherwise, we will end the joy of playing football.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
