

Brazil Wants to Ban Racism from Sports Fields

Contributed by Lana Cristina
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The Brazilian government will urge sports officials in Brazil and around the world to act to put a stop to manifestations of prejudice, racial discrimination, and xenophobia in soccer stadiums.

According to the executive secretary of the Special Presidential Secretariat of Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality, Douglas Martins de Souza, a campaign will be launched in conjunction with the Ministry of Sports to deal with this theme in an educational manner.

The campaign will discourage attitudes that can be characterized as racist and to demonstrate the importance of ethno-racial ethics.

In a joint communication released yesterday, the Minister of Sports, Agnelo Queiroz, and Minister Matilde Ribeiro, of the Secretariat of Racial Equality, repudiated displays such as the one that occurred April 13 at Morumbi Stadium, in São Paulo, when Leandro Desábato, who plays for the Quilmes team of Argentina, insulted a player from the São Paulo team, Grafite, during a match.

When the game ended, police commissioner Oswaldo Gonçalves, who witnessed the provocation, ordered Desábato's arrest on the grounds of defamation of character aggravated by racism.

In the note they regretted the incident, which they classified as grave. "It represents another step in the escalation of prejudice that is invading soccer stadiums all over the world," they observe in the note.

The two Ministers contend that "the Argentinean's racist attitude denies the values of equality, respect, and unity that sport promotes."

Desábato was released today after his lawyers paid a US\$ 3,850 (10,000 reais) bail and the player underwent a corpus delicti examination.

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