

Algeria Must Not Lose To Egypt - Karim Ziani

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Algeria are already bracing up for the World Cup clash against Magharebian rivals Egypt with the country's top star, Karim Ziani, declaring that they cannot afford to lose to the African champions in June

Matches between Egypt and Algeria are one of the fiercest on the African continent, and this will again be on show when both rivals clash in the qualifying rounds for the 2010 World Cup and the Africa Cup of Nations next year.

One of such games was played on November 17, 1989. A Hossam Hassan goal earned Egypt victory over their rivals and a place at Italy 1990 on the day. The match was witnessed by a record crowd of 120,000 at the Cairo International Stadium.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) designated the last clash between the two countries - a 2004 Nations Cup group game - as "high risk" and security had to be beefed up. Ten-man Algeria ran away 2-1 winners.

Algeria will host the Pharaohs on June 6 and Ziani insists it is a game his country cannot afford to lose.

"We cannot afford to lose to Egypt. Our fans will never forgive us if we do," said the Olympique Marseille star.

"Egypt are a good team, the best team in Africa but we know ourselves very well and there is a history between the two countries. It will be a tense match full of pressure, it won't be easy.

"But with the quality in our team and the support of the fans, we can achieve a good result against them."

The two-time Algerian Player of the Year said Algeria will also not take for granted the other teams, Zambia and Rwanda, in their qualifying group.

"We will take our games one at a time. There are no easy matches and all the games will be difficult," said the former Sochaux ace.

"Zambia are a good team and are hard to beat in their backyard while Rwanda are something of a surprise as they beat Morocco.

"However, I believe we stand a good chance of qualifying for the World Cup. We have matured and there are now many young players joining the team."

Algeria last featured at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico.

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