

ISSN: 2392-5442 ESSN : 2602-540X		<i>Sport system journal</i>
V/13 N/01 Year/2026		<i>International scientific journal published by: Ziane Achour –Djelfa- Algeria</i>
P 735 - 750		<i>Received: 2025-11-08 A ccepted: 2026-02-24</i>

The Role of Sport in Documenting the Algerian Cause

Hachi Khaled^{*1}: k.hachi87@univ-chlef.dz

Nara Abdelaziz²: aziz3171@gmail.com

Refas Badis³: b.rafas86@univ-chlef.dz

Chlef University

Djelfa University

Chlef University

Abstract

There is no doubt that the leaders and free men of the Algerian resistance employed every possible means to fight French colonialism and to express, by all available avenues, their demand for independence and self-determination. This study aims to highlight the role of sports in documenting the Algerian cause during the liberation revolution and in utilizing it as a tool of resistance against the oppressive French occupation. Moreover, it seeks to show how sports served as a means to convey the voice of the glorious revolution to the international public opinion, with the objective of raising awareness about the Algerian cause and mobilizing broader support for it.

Keywords: Sports, Algerian cause.

**Corresponding author / k.hachi87@univ-chlef.dz*

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of sports worldwide has always been closely linked to its impact and effectiveness in addressing social and political issues. The idea of practicing sports was to revive the spirit of friendly, non-violent competition in place of the conflicts and wars that prevailed between peoples for long periods and touched upon the foundations of love, affection and brotherhood. It is one of the important elements of development between countries and has a major contribution to achieving peace due to its role in society (Belkhiri, 2022, p. 116). Sports play a significant role in protecting members of society and preventing them from diseases and helping them to use their maximum capabilities (Abdul Karim Abdul Wahid, 2018, p. 128), and preserving its survival and continuity by preserving its value and social norms, as well as mobilizing the masses behind general and fateful issues (Masoudan and others, 2019, p. 230). Football in particular, has played a prominent role in shaping national identities and uniting people during times of political and social fragmentation or decline. Its role has been especially evident in anti-colonial struggles, as was the case in Algeria. Algeria stands as a remarkable example of how football was strategically employed to resist colonialism and to unify the masses. The role of sports became especially prominent in the Algerian struggle against French colonialism, as the Algerian revolution incorporated it alongside other means of resistance.

First: The Sporting Landscape in Algeria

European settlers in Algeria monopolized the establishment of football clubs. Until the end of the 19th century, football was limited to the settler population. Clubs such as Club des Joyeusetés d'Oran, founded in 1894, and Club Athlétique Liberté d'Oran, established in 1897, were created by European settlers. Other clubs soon followed in various Algerian cities with a strong European presence, such as Algiers, Constantine, and Annaba. (Oran – Club de foot – Footballologue.com)

I. Algerian Sports Clubs

1. Sports Clubs in the Capital and Eastern Algeria:

a. Mouloudia d'Alger Club:

Mouloudia d'Alger was founded on August 7, 1921 (Mahfoud Kaddache, p. 163). The club was named in reference to the Mawlid al-Nabawi (the Prophet's



The Winning Recipe is Not Universal: A Comparative Analysis of Victory Between the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFCON

birthday), which was approaching at the time. The name resonated widely with the community, leading to the selection of the name "Mouloudia Populaire Algérienne." The club also adopted the colors of Islam as its official team colors: green, symbolizing hope and being the symbolic color of Islam, and red, representing love for the homeland and the willingness to sacrifice for it.

The first board of directors of this club (Mouloudia d'Alger) consisted of: President Tayyar Mohamed; his deputies: Tehblis Abdallah, Stoul Kaddour, and Wujud Ahmed; and Rose Louis. The Secretary General was Mouloud Jazouli, and the General Treasurer was Tahmoun Djafar. Additional assistants and coaches were also involved, including Fouila Ahmed (football), Belkassaâ Abdelkader (tourism), Hanoun Larbi (track and field), Hammoudi Allal (basketball), and Hadad Mohamed (volleyball).

The first football team line-up included: Aïtouche, Khayatto, Bandour, Kouar, Hadad, Hamoutane, Abdellawi, Ghoiton Hamid, Douguioui, and Wiwilikan.

(Abdelrahmane Zani, 2003, pp. 32–56)

b. Club Sportif Constantinois:

The origins of this club trace back to the Iqbal Association, founded in 1898 in Constantine (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, 2014, p. 2) by a group of young men who recognized the need to establish an Islamic sports association. The club's colors—green and black—were chosen for religious and political reasons. Due to harassment by the colonial authorities, the association reemerged under a new name in 1916: An-Najm Al-Islami Al-Qusantini (Étoile Islamique Constantinoise).

Finally, Club Sportif Constantinois was officially established on June 26, 1926. The club included several branches: football, basketball, boxing, volleyball, motorcycle racing, and swimming.

The first board of directors consisted of: President Abdelrahmane Salah; Vice Presidents Saint Jean Daniel, Rivko François, Khatabi Abdelkader, Belhadj Mostefa, Zouaoui, Ben Cheikh Laghoun Badr Eddine, and Yetoun Robert; Secretary General Belgoudi Slimane and his assistant Ben Semir Ismaïl; General Treasurer Boudarbaya Mouloud; Financial Auditor Persson.

The assistants included: Vertry René, Roudsli Mostefa, Massaoud Ben El Hadj Ali, Ben Zemouri Mahmoud, Bouabdallah Ammar, Massali Burhan, Ben Tlis Larbi, and El Wali Bachir El Ghazali.

Coaches included: Attali Lousica and Ferrari René (football), Ben Chaïeb Bechara (swimming), Aboudia Sassi (boxing), Ben Djemat Mostefa (volleyball), and Ben Serda Salah (motorcycle racing).

(Abdelrahmane Zani, 2003, pp. 32–56)

2. Clubs in Western Algeria:

a. Mouloudia d'Oran Club:

Mouloudia d'Oran was founded on January 1, 1917. However, due to the circumstances of World War II, its activities were suspended as of 1940. The club re-emerged on May 14, 1946. The re-establishment ceremony was held at the Abou Bakr Esseddik mosque in the El Hamri neighborhood by Mohamed Bessoul, Ali Ben Touti, Omar Abouna, and Redouane Srik Boutaleb, who became the first president of the team, while Miloud Ben Draaou was the first president of the Cycling Federation. (Mohamed Gharbi, 2014–2015, p. 392)

b. Club Athlétique Liberté d'Oran (CALO):

This club was founded through the unification and merger of several associations on August 7, 1926, under the leadership of Sidi Essaaïm Slimane. (Mohamed Gharbi, 2014–2015, pp. 391–392)

c. Union Sportive Islamique Oranaise:

This club was established in 1926 and consisted of five sports divisions: football, basketball, swimming, athletics, and boxing. The board of directors included: President Ben Alioua Mohamed; Vice Presidents Abdallah Miloud and Sikal Mohamed; Secretary General Ben Ammar Miloud; and General Treasurer Hassan Abdelrahmane. (Abdelrahmane Zani, 2003, pp. 76–99)

In addition to the aforementioned clubs, several others were founded, such as Ghali Mascara on February 11, 1925, along with clubs that emerged in Algeria's southern oases. Each of these clubs carried the name of its region, such as Jeunesse Olympique de Bou Saâda (1947), Olympique d'El Oued (1948), Hilal Laghouat (1949), Association Sportive de M'sila (1932), and Mouloudia Club de Saïda.

Algerians, in collaboration with Tunisians and Moroccans, also founded a club in Paris in 1949 called Club Sportif Nord-Africain de Paris, followed later by Mouloudia Club de Paris. (Ahmed Asmani, 2011, p. 209)

II. Sports Associations in Algeria:

a. Association de la Nature:

This was the first association founded by Algerians in 1959. It was composed of doctors and teachers who were graduates of French schools, most



The Winning Recipe is Not Universal: A Comparative Analysis of Victory Between the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFCON

notably Dr. Ibn Touhami and Mohamed Essoualeh. The association aimed to showcase the intellectual and physical capabilities of Algerian youth in the face of their European counterparts.

b. Association Sportive Islamique:

Founded by the writer Ammar Chakroun—well known for his literary works and strong interest in sports due to its importance in physical and mental development and moral discipline—this association sought to promote the physical and intellectual growth of Algerian youth independently, without relying on French organizations.

c. Association de la Jeunesse Sportive:

This association emerged in Jijel, focusing on the individual capabilities of the Algerian people. It was among the organizations sympathetic to the Association des Oulémas Musulmans Algériens, contributing significantly to the awareness and motivation of youth to learn the Arabic language.

Following the outbreak of the Algerian War of Independence on November 1, 1954, all sports and physical activity were suspended, and the formation of any Islamic sports associations was prohibited. This was a colonial strategy aimed at maintaining control and forcing Algerians to include French and Jewish players on each football team, so they could serve as informants for the colonial regime. (Mohamed Azouz, p. 138)

III. The Brilliance of Algerian Youth in Sports:

Algerians excelled in several sports, becoming international champions and actively defending the Algerian cause. Many paid with their lives for the freedom of their nation and people. Among the most notable sports and athletes:

1. Boxing:

One of the most prominent names in boxing was Mohamed Belatresh, North African Champion in 1945, and Mohamed Daïti, who joined the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) in 1956. He played a key role in identifying traitors and collaborators (harkis). These champions represented national colors since the foundation of boxing in Algeria in 1912 on the international stage. (Abdelrahmane Zani, 2003, pp. 18–19)

2. Gymnastics:

The first Algerian gymnastics team was established in 1903 and represented Algeria in the Ardennes competition in France. The team consisted of four athletes

who won the team title. In 1908, Ahmed Gharmoul and Arezki Boudnah achieved equal scores in the national championship, despite limited training resources.

3. Cycling:

Cycling played a significant role in supporting the national movement. Cyclists such as Medani Ahmed, Senoussi Mohamed Amara, and Mohamed Amara Rabih, among others, succeeded in competing against the French and making a name for themselves on racing tracks.

4. Swimming:

Swimming in colonial Algeria was dominated by Europeans, but despite being a minority, Algerian swimmers managed to make their mark. They participated in various sporting events and earned recognition. Among the most notable swimmers were Ben Hamou Larbi Belaroussi and Belhadj Mostefa, who was considered a strong competitor to the world champion during the 1940s. (Ahsène Kacemi, 2008, p. 52)

II. The Formation of the National Liberation Front (FLN) Football Team

Given the evolution of the Algerian revolution, particularly after the Soummam Conference of 1956—which stipulated the creation of mass organizations affiliated with the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN)—there arose a need to establish a sports organization bearing its name, one that would represent the FLN in international sporting arenas. Due to the global popularity and influence of sports, and especially football, this initiative aimed to use sport as a means to amplify the voice of oppressed, struggling peoples. Recognizing football's global reach and popularity, the FLN gave it special attention and founded a football team bearing its name to serve as a symbol of the Algerian liberation struggle. (Kada El-Ahmar, p. 2)

The FLN faced the task of reaching out to Algerian players who were active in France. With meticulous planning, the FLN aimed to deliver a powerful shock to the French football community. It sowed the idea among fans of the sport that a new Algerian national football team was being formed, composed of professional Algerian players from French clubs, who would then withdraw from their teams. (Ahmed Asmani, p. 213)

On April 14, 1958, the FLN issued a communiqué announcing that Algerian professional athletes had left France in response to the call of Algeria and the FLN, to join the liberation struggle and raise awareness about the legitimacy of the national cause. Among the players who responded to the call were the Ben Tifour brothers, Abdelaziz, Boubekeur Abdelrahman, Mekhloufi Kaddour, and



The Winning Recipe is Not Universal: A Comparative Analysis of Victory Between the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFCON

Raoui Ammar, as well as Mustapha Zitouni. Additional players joined in two successive waves: the first in July 1958, and the second in 1960. (Achour Chakki, 2007, p. 264)

These players departed France for Tunisia—a significant victory for the FLN in France—especially given that many of these athletes were prominent figures in French football and some were even selected to represent France in the 1958 World Cup in Sweden. (Kada El-Ahmar, p. 2)

This event caused a major media stir across Europe, the Arab world, and globally. The first person to take charge of contacting players to form the team and respond to the FLN's call to join the propaganda mission from Tunisia was Mohamed Boumezrag, who compiled the initial list of twelve professional players during the World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow in 1957. (Kada El-Ahmar, p. 2)

Player Mohamed Maouche, a member of the FLN team, recounted in an interview that the return from the festival gave Boumezrag the strong idea of forming a team of French-based professionals. At that time, nearly forty Algerian expatriates were playing between France's first and second divisions, and even in amateur leagues. Most of them were in prominent clubs, such as Mustapha Zitouni. Some received the invitation, while others—like Haddad—did not. At the time, Boumezrag served as coach, Chaib as political correspondent, and Mohamed Khemisti as team manager in 1959. (Mohamed Maouche, 2024, source link)

Eventually, the full squad was composed of 32 players. The team included:

Goalkeepers: Boubekour Abdelrahman, Ali Doudou, Ahmed Abrear

Defenders: Mustapha Zitouni, Kaddour Mekhloufi, Mohamed Soukane, Cherif Bouchache, Ammar Abrear, Abdallah Setti, Abdelkrim Keroum, Abdelrahman Defnoun

Midfielders: Ihssan Boutaleb, Ali Ben Fadhel, Ammar Raoui, Hocine Cherif, Mokhtar Arbi, Said Haddad

Forwards: Abdelhamid Kermali, Abdelaziz Ben Tifour, Abdelhamid Bouchouk, Rachid Mekhloufi, Mohamed Boumezrag, Said Brahimi, Mohamed Maouche, Ahmed Oudjani, Abdelrahman Soukane, Amokrane Welikan, Abdelkader Mazoura, Hocine Bouchache, Mohamed Bouricha, Rachid Zouia, and Said Amara



The starting lineup of eleven players was composed of: Boubekeur, Arbi, Defnoun, Mekhloufi, Kermali, Soukane, Ben Tifour, Bouchouk, Brahimi, Raoui, and Zitouni. (Achour Chakki, p. 264)

After its formation, the FLN team played several matches outside the Arab world. Their first trip was to China, which welcomed the team with open arms. The team left Tunisia on October 8, 1959, and faced the Libyan national team along the way. Upon arriving in the People's Republic of China on October 15, they played several matches—some won, some lost.

In spring 1959, the team conducted a tour of seven Eastern European countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, under the leadership of Draji Zoghlach, despite only having 21 active players. (Aboulkacem Saadallah, 2007, pp. 248–249)

III. Challenges Faced by the FLN Football Team in Its Early Days and Its Key Matches:

a. Challenges Faced by the Team:

The Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) football team encountered numerous difficulties during its formation, training, and international travels. One of the most prominent challenges was the position taken by FIFA regarding its members, particularly in relation to the players' contractual status with French clubs. Many players had to "escape" or defect from their teams, leading to tensions. FIFA imposed sanctions and forbade any club or national team from playing matches against the FLN team.

In addition to FIFA's restrictions, another major issue arose regarding the financial authority entitled to manage the team's revenues. This became a subject of contention within the Algerian Ministry of Finance. The Ministry proposed that all revenues generated by the football team be deposited into a government account and used in local currency. However, at the time, converting foreign currency was extremely difficult, entailed significant financial losses, and posed considerable risk to the FLN's representatives.

(Aboulkacem Saadallah, 2007, pp. 246–247)

Another major challenge was the French government's success in intercepting and arresting other players who attempted to leave France to join their teammates and support the revolution. These efforts by France aimed to prevent the expansion and symbolic strength of the FLN team. (Kada El-Ahmar, p. 212)

b. Key Tours of the FLN Football Team:



The Winning Recipe is Not Universal: A Comparative Analysis of Victory Between the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFCON

The first major international tour of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) football team outside the Maghreb took place in January 1959, as the team headed to the Arab East. They traveled with only eighteen players, accompanied by Mohamed Boumezrag and FLN official Taleb Chaib. The team departed from Tunisia, passing through Tripoli, Libya, and finally arriving in Cairo. While in Egypt, the team underwent intensive and exhausting training sessions. Despite their stay and preparation in Cairo, no match dates were confirmed, and no games were played—without any official explanation. It later became clear to the FLN leadership that the Egyptian Football Federation was hesitant due to potential repercussions and threats from FIFA, and ultimately refused to allow a match against the FLN team.

Following this setback, the team left Egypt for Jordan, where they were warmly welcomed by Jordanian authorities and met with the King of Jordan. During this visit, the King received a message of gratitude from Ferhat Abbas and the Algerian people for his support of the Algerian cause. The team played four matches in Jordan, winning all of them.

In February 1959, the team traveled to Iraq aboard a chartered aircraft provided for them. They were received with great enthusiasm and support by both the Iraqi government and military. The team played six matches in different Iraqi cities, with the proceeds dedicated to supporting the Algerian revolution. They received overwhelming support from Iraqi crowds and emerged victorious in all their matches. (Charit Abdallah, p. 126)

After touring the Arab East, the team continued to Eastern Europe, starting with Bulgaria in May 1959. They were warmly welcomed by Bulgarian officials. The team trained and prepared for matches against Bulgarian clubs. Their first match was on May 12, 1959, against Dimitrovgrad, which the FLN team won. They then lost narrowly to Plovdiv (0–1), and Sofia (4–3), and drew against Varna (1–1). Their visit concluded with a reception by the Bulgarian Minister of Youth and Sports, who praised their resistance against French colonialism.

From Eastern Europe, the team traveled to Southeast Asia, beginning with North Vietnam. Their first match there was on November 8, 1959, in Hanoi against the military national team. They followed with a resounding 7–1 victory over Haiphong, then played another match against Ahon Ali, and finally defeated Nam Dinh on November 19, 1959. After this final match, the team and the entire FLN delegation were officially invited to breakfast at the private residence of

Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh, who expressed strong support for the Algerian cause and admiration for the resilience of the Algerian fighters. He wished them a swift victory and independence.

Following Vietnam, the team traveled to Beijing, China, where they played their last match in the Far East on November 29, 1959, defeating Beijing 1–0. They returned to Tunisia via Cairo by bus. The Middle Eastern and Asian tours fostered lasting bonds of solidarity among revolutionary nations.

(Abderrahim Kader, pp. 82–83)

In 1960, the FLN team toured Libya from May 20–29. They played five matches: The first against the Libyan national team, won 7–0. The second against Tripoli, this ended in a draw. A rematch with Tripoli, won 5–0. A match against Benghazi on May 27, won 2–1. A final match on May 29 against Benghazi again, won 5–2. (Sonia El Ghorab, 2015, pp. 54–55)

In 1961, the team began a new tour in Eastern Europe, from March to May. During this period, they played 21 matches across Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. The FLN team demanded that the Algerian national anthem be played and the Algerian flag be raised alongside those of the host countries at every match. In one notable match against the Olympic team of Mosul, the French ambassador was present but left the stadium immediately upon hearing the Algerian anthem. The FLN team won the match. (Sonia El Ghorab, 2015, p. 55)

The final chapter in the FLN team's revolutionary mission came with a tour of Libya in December 1962, the team played five consecutive games, two against the team of Tripoli, one in Misrata, two against Benghazi, and one against the Libyan Darya team. (Abderrahin Kater, p. 84). Thus, ended the four year mission of the FLN revolutionary team, which had been fighting and giving its all to the Algerian revolution.

IV. The Role of Sport in Reviving the Spirit of Revolution among the Algerian Masses

1. The Role of the FLN Football Team in Supporting the Algerian Revolution

Football distinguished itself from other sports through its highly effective role in internationalizing the Algerian cause on the global stage, reinforcing its legitimacy and delivering the voice of the Algerian people and their suffering to the world. The FLN football team demonstrated its significance through the matches it played in various countries. The team's activities began in Tunisia,



The Winning Recipe is Not Universal: A Comparative Analysis of Victory Between the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFCON

where their first match ended with a 5–1 victory, and the proceeds were donated to Algerian refugees. (Ahmed Asmani, p. 220)

The team's second tour took place in Morocco, where it played against various Maghreb clubs. Similar matches were held in other Arab countries such as Jordan, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. All of these nations showed belief in the Algerian cause and embraced the FLN team's project. (El Moudjahid Newspaper, 1958, p. 10)

The Algerian players competed in front of political figures and the international and Arab press, which attended to witness a team fighting for its homeland and freedom. For instance, in China, the team was hosted by Premier Zhou Enlai and received by President Mao Zedong. In Jordan, they were welcomed by King Hussein in 1959. In Vietnam, Vo Nguyen Giap received the FLN team at the military headquarters and expressed admiration for the Algerian people's struggle. In Yugoslavia, several officials engaged with the team, encouraged their resistance, and expressed solidarity. These encounters fostered strong bonds of friendship and mutual respect, especially with Yugoslavia. (Ahmed Asmani, pp. 221–223)

The team also played a key role in generating popular sympathy across the countries it visited. International and local radio, television, and sports press outlets covered the matches and the Algerian revolution, helping raise global awareness of the Algerian struggle and gain international recognition. (Kada El-Ahmar, p. 14)

Historian Aboukacem Saadallah (in *Cultural History of Algeria*, Vol. 10) noted that the revolution used sports, particularly football, as a form of media outreach. The FLN team carried banners calling for independence, raised the Algerian flag, sang national anthems in stadiums, and publicly voiced anti-colonial statements in favor of Algerian independence. (Aboukacem Saadallah, pp. 13–25)

One journalist even reported that the defection of Algerian athletes to join the FLN was a source of political anxiety within the French Parliament and led several members to vote against the government. (Abdallah, p. 130)

The FLN football team also financially supported the Algerian revolution. It served as a source of revenue for the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic. For example, a match against the Moroccan team generated one million francs for the revolutionary fund. In Jordan, King Hussein personally donated

\$1,400 to the cause. (Aboulkacem Saadallah, p. 251; El Moudjahid Newspaper, p. 7)

Between 1958 and 1962, the FLN team toured several European, African, and Asian countries, achieving 43 victories and recording 244 goals while conceding only 67—an outstanding record that reflected the team’s strength and its powerful role in raising Algeria’s national profile worldwide. (Salah Saudi, 2021, p. 3)

In many ways, the FLN team contributed directly to Algeria’s independence from France in 1962. Ferhat Abbas stated that the decision of professional Algerian footballers in French clubs to defect and join the FLN in Tunisia was a direct blow to colonial France, undermining its global image and weakening its position as a major world power. International media, especially in France, acknowledged that the FLN had created a historic moment. (Anes Arqoubi, 2019, p. 4)

Although the FLN team was established later in the revolution, the four years it spent promoting the Algerian cause were critical. By 1958, the FLN had successfully brought the Algerian issue to the United Nations and, on September 18, 1958, established the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic under Ferhat Abbas. France failed to resolve the conflict militarily, leading to successive government collapses and deepening economic and political crises caused by Algerian resistance. (Saleh Al-Arabi, 1977, p. 42)

The FLN football team ultimately played a decisive role in Algeria’s path to independence, which was finally achieved in July 1962 after 132 years of French occupation. This outcome came in part because General Charles de Gaulle, who took power in 1959, recognized that the Algerian people would never surrender and would remain steadfast in their struggle.

2. Other Sports Supporting the Liberation Revolution

Many historians agree on the vital contribution of Algerian athletes and sports in securing independence and liberating their country from French colonial rule. Some even described their role as a powerful extension of political and diplomatic action—a fact recognized by the head of the Provisional Government. (Salah Saudi, p. 2)

The Eight-Day Strike from January 28 to February 4, 1957, remains a pivotal moment in Algerian history. It was deeply linked to efforts to raise Algeria’s issue at the United Nations and demonstrated wide popular participation across all sectors—athletes, students, workers, farmers, and artisans. The strike



The Winning Recipe is Not Universal: A Comparative Analysis of Victory Between the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFCON

was particularly significant for the athletic community, including sports clubs and teams. (Mohamed Azzouz, p. 137)

Despite the difficult conditions facing Algerian sports clubs—such as budget shortages, racial discrimination, and colonial restrictions on sports activities—these clubs continued to promote national and religious values, community solidarity, and resistance through their efforts.

However, their activity was limited during the War of Liberation, despite the involvement of individuals of French, Italian, and Spanish origin. Nevertheless, these circumstances did not prevent them from practicing sports. Union Sportive d'Alger (USMA) faced the Jewish team, Alliance Sportive Israélite d'Alger (ALIA SIOUR), and hosted the Maribé les Combes club. This match became the talk of the town, and in April 1954, the local supporters were determined to win as a gesture of solidarity and support for their Palestinian brothers, who had been occupied by the Jews since 1948 (Mohamed El-Gharbi, pp. 292–293).

Assar Harman mentioned in his memoirs how the elite used sports matches in service of the Algerian Revolution. After the outbreak of the revolution, Ammar Harman exploited local matches to better identify collaborators with the French colonial system, especially Algerians among them—most notably Larbi Sabaghi from Oran, and Mohamed Harbi from Chlef, who practiced boxing. These matches were used in service of the revolution; through direct contact with French border troops, he discovered some of their weaknesses. For instance, some soldiers consumed cannabis, and he would provide them with it in exchange for certain Arab items and information as compensation for the drug they used. (Farhani Tarek, p. 2)

3. Reaction of the French and International Media to the FLN Team

Since its formation, the FLN football team became a hot topic in both French and international media. It all began with the startling news of the sudden disappearance of 10 players from the French league. The public was astonished, especially because all ten players shared one trait: they were of Algerian origin. This event dominated global headlines, particularly after it was revealed that the disappearance was not accidental—it was an organized defection. Prominent headlines in the French, British, and American press at the time read:

“Police Investigate the Disappearance of 10 Players”

“Mustapha Zitouni, One of the World’s Best Defenders, Sacrifices the World Cup for Algeria, Missing Out on a Career at Real Madrid”



“Police Confirm the Disappearance Was a Coordinated Escape”

“Ten Players of Algerian Origin Vanish”

“The French National Team Loses Key Players Ahead of the World Cup”

“Rachid Mekhloufi, The Man With Eyes in the Back of His Head, Joins the FLN Team”

“Algerian Players Embark on a Political Adventure” (Abdallah Chareet, p. 129)

The newspaper *L'Express* noted that the players' escape was a shocking revelation to over three million French readers who, that week, learned of the war in Algeria through this unprecedented sports event. According to their reporting, eleven of the best professional footballers—originating from North Africa—had left their clubs.

The sports daily *L'Équipe* remarked:

“No one could have imagined the sudden withdrawal of Algerian players from their clubs on the eve of critical parliamentary discussions and preparations for a major international football match against Switzerland in the World Cup qualifiers, the finals of which were to be held in Sweden in 1958.” (Ahmed Asmani, p. 213)

In a press statement, journalist Jacques Vendour described Abdelaziz Ben Tifour as a football icon of the 1950s, and said that Zitouni and Mekhloufi were the Zidane and Platini of their era. Their covert departure, he noted, was a devastating blow to France, comparable to a military loss. In a retrospective interview with the newspaper *L'Humanité*, FLN team member Mohamed Maouche said:

“If I could go back in time, I wouldn't change a thing. None of us were just footballers—we were Algerians, and we fought for Algeria's independence.” (Anes Arqoubi, p. 3)

Conclusion

this study, we have identified the vital role played by Algerian sports associations, teams, and clubs in internationalizing the Algerian cause and exerting pressure on the French colonial regime. These entities became instrumental in raising the Algerian flag on international platforms—without the French tricolor—thus symbolically asserting national identity.

Sport emerged as a new and effective tool in the struggle against colonialism, serving to promote the liberation movement and preserve Algerian national identity. This occurred during a time when media outlets were either



The Winning Recipe is Not Universal: A Comparative Analysis of Victory Between the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFCON

absent or severely limited; making sports a critical medium for spreading awareness and fostering a collective sense of resistance and patriotism.

References:

- Abderrahmane Zani(2003), *Les associations sportives d'Algérie (1867–1952)*, 2nd Edition.
- Abu Al-Qasim Saadallah(2007), *Cultural History of Algeria (1954–1962)*, Vol. 10, Dar Al-Basa'ir for Publishing and Distribution, Algiers.
- Achour Cherfi(2007), *Encyclopedia of the Algerian Revolution (1954–1962)*, transl. Mokhtar Alam, Dar Al-Qasba Publishing, Algiers.
- Ahmed Asmani(2011), *The Role of Algerian Athletes Migrating to France in the Liberation Revolution*, *Historical Studies Journal*, Issue 13, University of Algiers 2.
- Ahsan Qasmi(2008), *An Introduction to Sports Activities in Algeria before and during the Liberation Revolution*, *Al-Arabi Journal*, National Institute for the Training of Youth Frameworks, Issue 16.
- Al-Arabi Al-Jadid(2014), *History of Algerian Football – Episode One: Sports Clubs with Political Aims*, June 2.
- Anis Arqoubi(2019), *History of Football: Algerian Athletes... Revolutionaries Against Colonialism*, *Noon Post Magazine*, Published on 18/11/2019.
- Chareet Abdallah, *The Algerian Revolution in the International Press*, Publications of the National Mujahid Museum, Vol. 1, 1959.
- Dr. Abdelkarim Abdel Wahid(2018), *Al-Manzomah Al-Riyadiyah Journal*, "Relaxation Techniques Used by Coaches to Help Handball Players Reduce Psychological Stress Associated with Sports Competition," Volume 5, Issue14 .
- Dr. Belkhiri Ben Malouka(2022), "Sports Violence and Its Relationship to Religious Values," *Al-Manzomah Al-Riyadiyah Journal*, Volume 9, Issue03 .
- Dr. Masoudan Makhlof, Dr. Qassar Al-Mahi, Dr. Rapiq Saed(2019), "Sports between Education and Culture in the Age of Globalization and Professionalism," *Al-Manzomah Al-Riyadiyah Journal*, Volume 6, Issue15 .
- Exclusive Interview with Mohamed Maouche, Player of the FLN Football Team
- Farhani Tarek Aziz, *Reading in the Memoirs of Commander Ammar Jarman "The Truth"*, Vol. 2.



- Kaddah Al-Ahmar, The Role of the FLN Football Team in Promoting the Algerian Cause (1958–1962), University of Sidi Bel Abbès.

- Mahfoud Kaddache(1939–1951), History of the Algerian National Movement , Vol. 2, Dar Al-Umma, Algiers.

- Mohamed Azzouz, Algerian Sports during the Liberation Revolution – Another Image of Algerian Struggle, Al-Maydan Journal, Human and Social Sciences, Institute of Physical Education and Sports, Vol. 3, No. 3, University of Djelfa, p. 138.

- Mohamed Gharbi(1945–1962)(2014–2015), Social and Cultural Conditions in the Wilaya of Oran , PhD Thesis in Modern and Contemporary History, Djilali Liabès University – Sidi Bel Abbès, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History.

- Saoudi Saleh(2021), How Sports Lifted Algeria’s Head High in the Face of Colonial Oppression, Echorouk Magazine, Vol. 31, Issue 10.

- Sonia Al-Ghorab(2015), The Glorious FLN Football Team Wearing the National Colors, Army Magazine, Military Publishing Foundation, Issue 523, Algiers.

-Ahmed Hamdi(1995), The Algerian Revolution and the Media, Publications of the Mujahid Museum, Algiers.

-[https://apc-](https://apc-elbiar.dz/%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%B4-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7)

[elbiar.dz/%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%B4-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7](https://apc-elbiar.dz/%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%B4-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7) – Accessed December 31, 2024, at 19:22.