

Carthage Eagles crowned Champions of Africa

Tunisia beat Morocco 2-1 in Cup of Nations' final

[Fadhel Kaboub](#) Feb . 16 . 2004

Tunisia won its first-ever African Cup of Nations trophy after beating rival Morocco 2-1 in a historic North African final match.



**Tunisian Defensive liners
Bouazizi and Badra lift the
2004 African Nations Cup**

Just 4 minutes into the game, Tunisian striker Silva dos Santos delivered a surprise header finishing off a cross from Mehdi Nafti and giving the Carthage Eagles the lead. Sixty-thousand fans cheered the home team at Rades Stadium in Tunis, and hundreds of thousands more who couldn't get tickets to the game gathered in front of big screens set up in stadiums and town centers across the country.

Morocco's Atlas Lions, although technically more capable in their offensive line than their Tunisian counterparts, fought against a very tough Tunisian defensive line despite the absence of Khaled

Badra (voted best player of the semi-final game against Nigeria's Super Eagles) who was booked for second yellow card in the semi-finals (1-1 and 5-3 penalties).



**The 2004 African Champions,
cheered by 60,000 fans, do a lap of
honor at the Rades Stadium in Tunis**

In the match's 39th minute Youssef Mokhtari scored a beautiful header sending the two teams to the locker rooms at halftime tied 1-1. Mokhtari's late first-half goal gave more hope to Moroccan fans who expected their offensive attack to be as aggressive as it was in the semi-finals against Mali (4-0).

Just 6 minutes (51st minute) into the second half, Zied Jaziri took advantage of a bad mistake by Morocco's Khalid Fouhami who split a tame cross into his path scoring Tunisia's winning goal. Fouhami was voted best goalkeeper of the tournament. Despite constant pressure on Tunisia's defensive line for the rest of the game, Ali Boumnijel and his teammates managed to keep Morocco's strikes away from their net. The Carthage Eagles also missed scoring the killer-goal on two failed counter-attack opportunities.

As soon as the referee blew the games final whistle, millions of fans took to the streets to celebrate the country's first ever continental victory after being runner-up in 1965 and 1996.

The two North African rivals will meet again for the 2006 World Cup qualifying games. Only one team from group five (Tunisia, Morocco, Kenya, Guinea, Malawi, and Botswana) will secure a spot in the 2006 FIFA World Cup



in Germany. The Carthage Eagles and The Atlas Lions will fight hard for the single qualifying ticket to Germany 2006.

Winning its first-ever African Cup, Tunisia has now boosted its chances of winning the bid for the 2010 World Cup. Morocco, Libya, Egypt, and South Africa are also bidding to host the 2010 tournament. FIFA will announce its decision on May 15, 2004.

Nigeria beat Mali 2-1 on Friday to secure third place in the 2004 tournament. The next African Cup of Nations will take place in 2006 in Egypt.

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