

There's still no clear end to the debate sparked by Gasogi United's refusal to take the pitch on Sunday March 22. What should have been a routine league fixture at Amahoro Stadium, instead turned into a 3-0 forfeit win for Rayon Sports, and a growing controversy that now stretches well beyond a single missed match.

At the centre of it all is a late change of venue and kick-off time. The game between Rayon Sports vs. Gasogi United had originally been set for Kigali Pelé Stadium at 3pm on Sunday. Then came the switch: Amahoro Stadium, 7pm, same day. Gasogi United say they weren't properly consulted. Rwanda Premier League (RPL) officials insist they were informed through the usual channels.

That disagreement alone might have been manageable. But in the days since, another layer has complicated things; money.

RPL executive director Jules Karangwa has tried to keep the focus on procedure. Speaking after the incident, he maintained that Gasogi United had been notified appropriately. As for suggestions that finances played a role in the club's decision to boycott the match, he struck a careful tone.

"In the documents they sent us, there's no mention of money," he said. "What was raised instead was the idea that the changes would lead to some losses in their preparations."

Still, the financial angle refuses to go away.

Reports circulating in social media suggest that Rayon Sports received around 13 million Rwandan francs from Al Hilal SC to agree to the rescheduling. The logic, according to those accounts, was straightforward: move the domestic fixture to follow Al Hilal's CAF Champions League quarter-final, and you draw a larger crowd, particularly from Rayon's sizeable fan base.

Al Hilal got the crowd in the game on Sunday. They didn't get the result, losing 1-0 to RS Berkane and bowing out of the Confederation of African (CAF) competition.

For some observers, the situation feels familiar. Back in November 2025, Gasogi United were involved in a similar arrangement. Their match against Kiyovu Sports was moved to Amahoro Stadium under comparable circumstances, also tied to Al Hilal's continental schedule. On that occasion, Gasogi reportedly received about 3 million Rwandan francs to accommodate the change.

That precedent has only sharpened the current dispute. If compensation was part of the equation then, some are asking, why not now?

Karangwa pointed to that earlier case as evidence that such adjustments aren't unusual, especially when linked to regional competitions. But this time, the absence, or perceived absence, of a financial agreement appears to have hit a nerve.

Gasogi United president Charles Nkuriza Kakooza, popularly known as KNC hasn't held back. Speaking on a morning radio programme, he flatly rejected the league's version of events, insisting his club was never formally notified of the changes.

"I swear before God," he said, "bring the letter you claim you sent to Gasogi United. Show it. Stop confusing people, put it out there."

He later took to social media with a calmer message, urging supporters to be patient and allow the rules to take their course.

For now, the immediate consequences are clear. Rayon Sports take the three points, moving up to 42 and into fourth place. Gasogi United, meanwhile, face a 2 million franc fine on top of the sporting setback, according to rules.

What's less clear is how, or when, the broader questions will be settled. The dispute has exposed fault lines around communication, transparency and the role of financial incentives in domestic scheduling.

And until those issues are addressed, this won't just be remembered as a missed match. It will linger as a case study in how quickly trust can unravel when decisions, however routine they may seem, aren't shared, or understood, in the same way by everyone involved.