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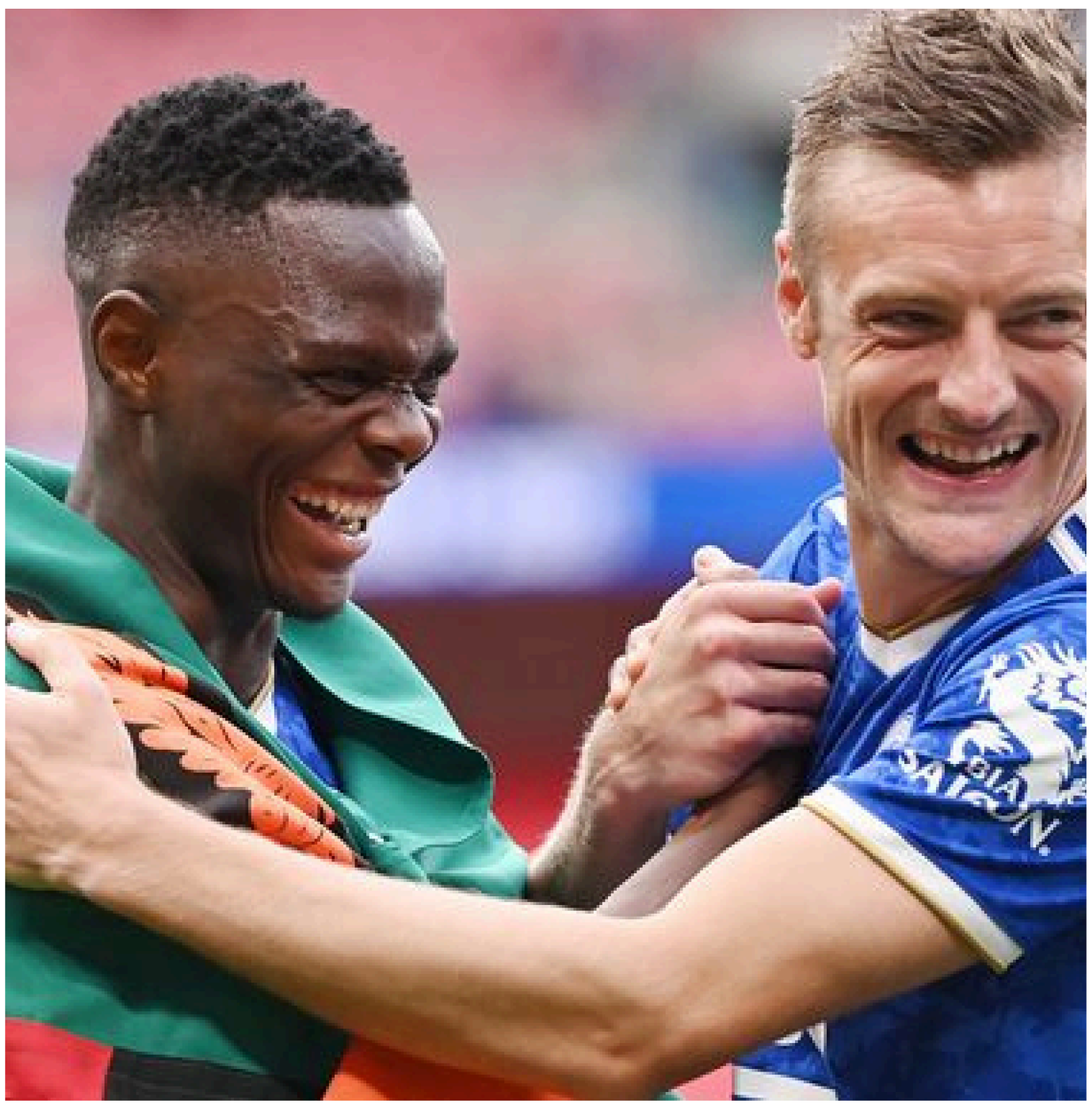

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CAN DAKA FIT IN VARDY'S SCORING BOOTS?

By Lucky Chama

Leicester City Football Club have confirmed the departure of legendary striker Jamie Vardy at the end of the 2024/25 Premier League season, closing a 13-year chapter at the club.

The 38-year-old joined the Foxes for £1M from Fleetwood Town in 2012. Since then, he has become a winner of the Premier League, FA Cup, Community Shield, and double Championship during a golden era for the club.

He has been hailed as Leicester's greatest-ever player, with nearly 500 appearances and almost 200 goals to his name.

Vardy's final game at King Power Stadium will be on Sunday 18 May against Ipswich Town, where he will bid farewell to the supporters with whom he has lived through his rise from a non-league hopeful to one of the best goal scorers the Premier League has ever seen.

On the way to winning the 2015/16 Premier League title, Vardy scored 24 goals in 36 appearances for Leicester City in the league. He continued to score 143 goals over 10 seasons.

Now that Vardy is out, Zambian striker Patson Daka might be the Foxes' preferred goal scorer.
After years of being an understudy to the veteran English striker, Daka will need to step up his conversion rate to command a starting berth for Leicester City.

The Chipolopolo striker joined Leicester City in 2021 for £22 million from Austrian outfit Red Bull Salzburg but has failed to command the main strikers' role as Jamie Vardy remained the preferred option.

In previous interviews, Daka has revealed how much he has learned playing alongside the club legend.
"Jamie has been one of my inspirations," Daka told BBC in October 2021.

"I am sure you can tell with the kind of playing style that I have, which is similar to him. It is a big privilege for me to be working alongside him. He helps me a lot in training."

In November of the same year, Daka also reaffirmed his desire to replicate Vardy's heroics at Leicester City.

Daka said, "It's been amazing working with him, being close to him, learning from him. He's a great guy. I was talking to him before my first game, and it's special for me to work alongside him. I believe there is a lot more I can learn from him."
With 157 appearances for Leicester City, Daka has scored 34 goals with 18 assists.

Daka and his teammates will be aiming to win back promotion to the Premier League after their relegation was confirmed by the 1-0 defeat to Liverpool last Sunday.

SABOBO BANDA EYES STRONG START

By Lucky Chama

Zambia Under-20 winger Joseph Sabobo Banda emphasizes that the outcome of the first match against debutants Sierra Leone at the 2025 Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) will be crucial in determining the team's tournament journey.

The Junior Chipolopolo are in Group A alongside hosts Egypt, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, and South Africa.

Boyd Mulwanda's side will kick off their campaign on Sunday at 16:00 against the Sierra Leonean team, the Shooting Stars.

The FC Zurich forward is one of the six foreign-based players summoned for the tournament scheduled from April 27 to 18 May 2025. The semi-finalists will book a slot at the U20 FIFA World Cup to be hosted in Chile.

In an interview, Banda believes that qualifying for the World Cup will depend on how the team performs in the group stage.

Banda says that the first match is crucial for building momentum for the 2017 champions, who were last at the FIFA U20 World Cup in the same year.

"The target is to win the first match; it is key because it will give us the direction and determine our realistic chances of attaining our target," Banda said.

On qualifying for the World Cup, the 19-year-old says, "The group stage is the first step to qualifying for the World Cup. We need to start by finishing in first or second, then we can talk about World Cup qualification."

In the buildup to the tournament, the team beat Ghana 2-1 in a preparatory match played on Tuesday,. Goals from ZESCO United duo Pascal Phiri and David Simukonda were enough for Zambia to beat Ghana, who scored through Aziz Yeti Mizbawu.

MWEETWA SLAMS LACK OF TECHNICAL STRUCTURES IN LOCAL CLUBS

By Lucky Chama

Former Chipolopolo striker Nchimunya Mweetwa has noted that local football clubs have neglected critical structures that play a role in developing the game.
Speaking in an interview with FullTime, Mweetwa said soccer fans should not have high expectations of local clubs, especially in continental football, because of a lack of structures.
Mweetwa adds that with most teams not having technical directors, it is hard to achieve success because coaches can only do as much compared to technical directors.
He adds that technical directors are crucial as they give identity to the club through defining their style of play, creating player profiles to align with playing philosophies, and undertaking other essential responsibilities.
He states that a weak league translates into below-par performances at the national team level.
"Back in the days, our league was very strong; that's why it was very easy for the national team to perform at a very good level," he said.
Mweetwa adds, "Nowadays our league is not in the top 10; that on its own should tell you that we should not expect much from our senior men's team."
The former Buildcon Football Club coach has urged clubs to take a leaf from the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ), which has a technical director who has helped to develop youth football, going by the recent dominance at regional level.
Zambia Under-17 boys recently qualified to the U17 FIFA World Cup.

The men's Under-20 will be aiming to qualify to the Under-20 FIFA World Cup by among the semi-finals at the upcoming Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt.
The Under-17 Women's national team is in Togo, for the second leg, third round U17 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifier against Benin. Overall winner qualifies to the global showpiece.
Mweetwa states that football has changed over the years and the technical directors' role has become increasingly important in modern football.
"We need to be honest with ourselves; our league is not strong at the moment. We need to put up proper structures and move with time," Mweetwa said.
"At the FA level, we have a very vibrant technical director, who is knowledgeable, but at the club local league level, we don't have technical directors. A technical director is very important even for a club.
"We just have coaches, and we expect them to do everything. Football has evolved; there are new threats that have come in. We just want results, but we don't want to invest."

KAINDU: MONEY TALKS AS FINANCIALLY BACKED CLUBS RESHAPE ZIM PSL LANDSCAPE

By Lucky Chama

Highlanders Football Club head coach Kelvin Kaindu believes massive monetary investments in the Zimbabwean Premier Soccer League club has levelled the playing field.

The Zambian gaffer is in his second season as the Bosso coach after returning to Zimbabwe last season.

When Kaindu first landed his first Bosso coaching job in 2011, the Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League was dominated by traditional heavyweights — Highlanders, Dynamos and CAPS United.

Reflecting on the progress over the last decade, Kaindu mentioned that the PSL has become highly competitive with the rise of well-funded and ambitious clubs such as FC Platinum and Ngezi Platinum Stars, among others.

"I think in the past we would talk about Highlanders, Dynamos and CAPS United. These are brands that have been there in football for so many years.," Kaindu told Zimpapers Hub.

"But with the coming in of these other teams that have come, maybe with a bit of resources, they have even made the competition to be a bit hard."

Kaindu, who guided Highlanders to sixth place the previous season, claims that heavy financial support has increased competition.

"We saw FC Platinum and Ngezi Platinum coming in. Now we have got Simba Bhora, we have got Scottland, we have got Herentals, we have got GreenFuel, TelOne . . . these are teams with strong financial backing," Kaindu observed. "They have the capacity in terms of finances, they're able to compete, able to get the player they want and yet we (the traditional giants) still remain there."

ZAMBIAN WEIGHTLIFTERS COMPETE AT AFRICAN SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS IN MAURITIUS

By Lucky Chama

Two Zambian weightlifters are currently representing the country at the ongoing African Senior Weightlifting Championships taking place in Mauritius, from April 20 to 28, 2025.

Isaac Sinka, a previous silver medalist in the 55kg category, was unable to defend his title at this year's competition. Sinka made history at the 2023 edition in Tunisia by winning three silver medals — in the snatch, clean and jerk, and overall total — becoming the first Zambian to achieve such a feat in his weight class. Despite high hopes going into the tournament, Sinka fell short of the podium this year due to increased competition and challenging lifts.

Meanwhile, Joseph Njobvu, competing in the 73kg category, is scheduled to take to the platform later today at 16:00 Zambian time.

Njobvu has been in top form during training and is aiming to bring home a medal as he makes his mark at the continental level.

The African Senior Weightlifting Championships provide an important platform for African athletes to qualify for international competitions and gain recognition on the global stage. For Zambia, the participation of Sinka and Njobvu demonstrates the nation's growing commitment to the sport of weightlifting.

BUSA CLINCH PROMOTION TO FAZ DIVISION TWO WITH GAMES TO SPARE, EYES SET ON PROVINCIAL DIVISION ONE

By Lucky Chama

Bauleni United Sports Academy (BUSA) has guaranteed their spot in the Lusaka FAZ Division Two League for the upcoming season with three games remaining.

The Chilufya Kangwa-drilled side has amassed 70 points from 31 matches, recording 21 wins, seven draws and three defeats.

With 59 goals scored and the fewest goals given up (16), the team also has the most powerful offensive force.

Their closest challenger in the league is Spartan Lusaka, which has 59 points from the same 31 matches.

This season, BUSA's striker Peter Tembo has scored 15 goals, while teammate Justine Mukoma has contributed 11 goals.

In an exclusive interview with FullTime, BUSA Chief Operating Officer Fred Kangwa said it has been the team's vision to play in the Provincial Division One League.

Kangwa notes that getting to the FAZ Lusaka Division Two League is a step closer to realising their long-held dreams of playing in Division One and consequently in the National League.

"We've been looking forward to going as far as Division One, possibly nationally in the future, but Division One has been our target. So, we tried the past two seasons. Of course, what was, eliminating us was the issue of the teams that were in the National League that were dropping out. But we continued fighting," Kangwa said.

"And this season, we put together a quality side, comprising boys that we bought from our 19 and also the senior team. And I think they blended well together with also the incoming of a new coach to take over. It brings joy and delight that we managed to qualify for Division Two with that margin that we had.

"From the bottom of our hearts, the coaches, the players, and the entire management at Busa. We are so, so excited. Looking forward to Division Two next season and possibly Division One, which is our prime target."

VAN NISTELROOY UNSURE IF HE WILL KEEP LEICESTER JOB

By BBC

Ruud van Nistelrooy says he is still waiting to find out if he will keep his job as Leicester City manager following the club's relegation from the Premier League.

The Foxes, whose 1-0 defeat by Liverpool at the King Power Stadium last weekend confirmed they would be returning to the Championship, have earned just eight points from 20 matches under the Dutchman.

Van Nistelrooy, 48, said he has sat down with the owners and the board and told them "how we move forward as a club".

"I know what my plan is to bring the club back but I am waiting on alignment," he added.

"The quicker the better for the football club."

Leicester face Wolves at Molineux on Saturday at 15:00 BST.

Van Nistelrooy signed a three-year deal with Leicester in November, following the sacking of Steve Cooper after just 157 days in charge. However, the former Manchester United striker's appointment failed to rally the club, and their second relegation in three seasons was on the cards for months.

The defeat by leaders Liverpool, their 16th in the past 18 games, was the Foxes' ninth consecutive Premier League home game without scoring a goal - a new top-flight record.

A light aircraft was flown over the stadium before kick-off on Sunday, trailing a banner reading "King Power Clueless Sack The Board".

ANCELOTTI BACK IN THE FRAME: BRAZIL REIGNITES PURSUIT OF REAL MADRID BOSS AMID UNCERTAINTY

BY ESPN

Carlo Ancelotti is once again the front-runner for Brazil's vacant coaching job, sources told ESPN Brasil.

Brazil's Football Confederation (CBF) fired coach Dorival Júnior last month and had considered Al Hilal manager Jorge Jesus as a potential replacement.

Ancelotti, whose contract with Real Madrid runs until June 2026, has been CBF president Ednaldo Rodrigues' preferred choice to lead Brazil ever since Tite stepped down after the 2022 World Cup.

Although Ancelotti has publicly reiterated his desire to continue at Madrid, his position has come under intense pressure since Madrid's 5-1 aggregate elimination at the hands of Arsenal in the Champions League quarterfinals.

Madrid are still in the race for LaLiga but are four points off leaders Barça with five games left.

The CBF is closely monitoring Saturday's Copa del Rey final between Real Madrid and Barcelona, knowing that a defeat could lead to Ancelotti's dismissal.

When asked about his future, Ancelotti recently said: "There's nothing to say. We'll talk about it at the end of the season."

A source told ESPN that talks between CBF representatives and Ancelotti's entourage have resumed in recent weeks.

YOU CAN ALMOST TOUCH IT, LIVERPOOL FANS THE REDS WILL BE CROWNED PREMIER LEAGUE CHAMPIONS WITH A DRAW ON SUNDAY