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Edition 007 - Tuesday September 8, 2026

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POWER MUST CHANGE TACTICS TO OVERTURN DEFICIT

Football coach Nebert Phiri has challenged Power Dynamos head coach Oswald Mutapa to make tactical changes as the Zambian champions seek to overturn a 1-0 first-leg deficit against Al Merrikh in the CAF Champions League first preliminary round...

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ARROWS WIN, BUT MBEWE WANTS MORE AFTER ROUGE TEST

By Lucky Chama



Red Arrows may have secured the ideal result, but head coach Chisi Mbewe believes there is still considerable work to do after the Airmen opened their CAF Confederation Cup campaign with a 2-0 victory over FC Rouge at Levy Mwanawasa Stadium on Saturday.

The Zambian side produced enough quality to claim a clean sheet and a two-goal advantage in the first leg of the first preliminary round, but the scoreline perhaps flattered neither the resilience of the Malagasy visitors nor the number of opportunities Arrows created.

For long spells, FC Rouge were disciplined, compact and comfortable absorbing pressure. Their defensive organisation repeatedly frustrated the hosts and exposed one of Arrows' biggest shortcomings on the afternoon, their failure to convert dominance into goals.

Arrows started patiently, gradually pushing Rouge deeper into their defensive shape.

Godfrey Ngwenya was fouled on the edge of the box in the 15th minute, presenting Ackim Mumba with an inviting free-kick opportunity. Mumba's effort caused an awkward spill from the Rouge goalkeeper, but the rebound went begging.

Eliya Mandanji then came close in the 28th minute after cutting inside brilliantly before firing narrowly wide, while Alassane Diarra headed just wide two minutes later from another dangerous Mumba delivery.

The pressure intensified in the 35th minute when Brian Chilimina and Paul Katema both missed presentable opportunities in quick succession.

Those misses could have become costly in a tighter contest, but Arrows finally found the breakthrough four minutes later.

Mumba continued to cause problems from the right and delivered another quality ball into the box, with Mandanji rising above the defence to guide a composed header beyond the goalkeeper.

It was a deserved reward for Arrows' sustained pressure and a moment of individual quality from Mandanji, who announced himself on the continental stage in style.

The second half followed a similar pattern. Rouge returned with greater purpose, but Arrows remained in control and continued looking for a second goal.

Mbewe responded by making his first changes in the 52nd minute, introducing Munda Phiri and Lazarous Chishimba for Saddam Yusuf Phiri and Ngwenya.

Five minutes later, the advantage was doubled.

Diarra found the net in the 57th minute, giving Arrows breathing space and putting Rouge under greater pressure to open up.

But the visitors refused to collapse.

That resilience was evident when Peter Kalota's 59th-minute free-kick created panic in the Rouge box, only for the goalkeeper to produce an excellent save.

Diarra was denied another goal in the 77th minute when the Rouge goalkeeper reacted superbly to tip his attempted chip over the bar following a quick counter-attack.

Arrows had further opportunities to put the tie beyond doubt, including a late chance for Joseph 'Dangote' Phiri in the 87th minute, but he lifted his effort over the crossbar from close range.

And that perhaps explains Mbewe's assessment of the match.

Despite the comfortable-looking 2-0 victory, the coach knows that continental football punishes wastefulness, particularly when the opposition remains capable of making the return leg uncomfortable.

"First games are always difficult but the team will pick up in the next games. We will get back to training and continue to correct areas that need improvement to build the rhythm and sharpen our execution," said Mbewe.

That is the balance Arrows take from the opening leg.

Two goals, a clean sheet and a winning start represent an excellent foundation. But the missed chances also provide a warning.

Had Rouge been more clinical in transition or had Arrows failed to find the breakthrough, the narrative could have been very different.

For FC Rouge, the 2-0 defeat leaves them with a difficult task, but their defensive discipline demonstrated that they are unlikely to surrender the tie without a fight.

For Arrows, meanwhile, the objective is now to manage the advantage intelligently while improving the attacking efficiency Mbewe wants to see.

The Airmen travel to St Louis in Mauritius for the second leg on Sunday, September 13, 2026, holding a two-goal advantage but knowing the tie is not yet over.

Arrows have won the first battle. Mbewe wants them to finish the war.

PHIRI URGES MUTAPA TO CHANGE POWER'S ATTACKING APPROACH

By Lucky Chama



Football coach Nebert Phiri has urged Power Dynamos head coach Oswald Mutapa to make tactical changes ahead of the second leg of the CAF Champions League first preliminary round against Sudanese side Al Merrikh.

Power Dynamos suffered a 1-0 defeat to Al Merrikh in the first leg on Saturday, leaving the Zambian champions needing to overturn the deficit in the return leg at Levy Mwanawasa Stadium in Ndola.

Phiri believes Mutapa faces a demanding period, with the coach having to balance responsibilities at club and national-team level.

According to Phiri, Mutapa currently has three major responsibilities: preparing Power Dynamos for their CAF Champions League campaign, preparing the team for the transitional league, which he described as a dangerous period, and serving as an assistant coach for the Chipolopolo.

Phiri questioned the demands placed on Mutapa as he balances his national-team responsibilities with his club duties.

"How many phone calls does he receive especially with every club chairman to choose their player for national duty?" Phiri asked.

He also believes Power Dynamos need greater variation in attack, particularly from their attacking midfielders.

"His attacking midfielders have to be changed. They were attacking the same way. Nothing different," Phiri said.

"Every attack was the same. No change in ball movement."

Phiri's comments come with Power Dynamos facing a crucial second leg at home, where they will need to score while preventing Al Merrikh from extending their advantage.

The Zambian champions will therefore have to find greater attacking variety if they are to overturn the 1-0 deficit and keep their CAF Champions League campaign alive.

TANA EXPECTS STRONG START TO TRANSITIONAL LEAGUE

By Lucky Chama



Nkana FC coach Elijah Tana says the team is targeting a strong start to the MTN Super League Transition Season after Saturday's 2-2 draw against Roan United, with the friendly providing valuable lessons as Kalampa continues preparations for the new campaign.

Tana was encouraged by Nkana's response after falling behind within the opening two minutes at Kafubu Stadium in Luanshya, although he acknowledged the need for his players to begin matches with greater intensity.

"We started the game at a low pace. We conceded that goal in the first two minutes, which is not good for us," Tana said.

Nkana twice came from behind, with Charles Zulu cancelling out Joshua Banda's early opener before Semiwe Mwila restored Roan's lead. Joseph Chileshe then struck in the 83rd minute to rescue a 2-2 draw.

Tana said the team's second-half performance was particularly encouraging as the technical bench continues to assess the squad and address areas requiring improvement.

"In the second half we played very well. We managed to equalise late in the game. We had some chances to win the game in the second half," he added.

With the league campaign approaching, Tana says every pre-season fixture is being used to sharpen the team ahead of their opening match against newly promoted Trident FC on October 3.

"Our expectation is to start strong in the league. These games will help us prepare for it," Tana said.



JESSE WERE JOINS KIBERA BLACK STARS

By FT Sports Reporter



Experienced Kenyan forward Jesse Were has joined National Super League side Kibera Black Stars as he begins a new chapter in his decorated career.

Were is best remembered in Zambia for his prolific spell with Zesco United, where he scored over 100 goals and became the club's all-time leading scorer.

The forward began his senior career with Mathare United before moving to Tusker, where he won the 2012 Kenyan Premier League title.

He later claimed the 2015 Golden Boot after scoring 22 goals for Tusker, further establishing himself as one of Kenya's leading strikers.

Were moved to Zambia in 2016 when he joined Zesco United, where he enjoyed a highly successful spell.

During his time with the Ndola giants, he helped the club win four Zambian Super League titles, two ABSA Cup trophies and two Charity Shield titles, while establishing himself as the club's all-time leading goalscorer.

After leaving Zesco United, Were joined Kansanshi Dynamos before returning to Kenya, where he signed for Kenya Police.

He added another FKF Premier League title to his honours list with Kenya Police during the 2024/25 season.

The move to Kibera Black Stars sees the experienced striker return to Kenya's second tier as he looks to continue his career and bring his experience and goalscoring pedigree to the NSL side.



EASTERN FAZ HAILS REFEREES, WARNS AGAINST MATCH-FIXING

By Lucky Chama



Eastern Province Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) Chairperson Patrick Nyirenda has commended referees from the province for their performance in the recent Cooper Test, while warning individuals suspected of manipulating matches that the association will not tolerate match-fixing.

In his weekly focus column, Nyirenda said Eastern Province sent 45 referees to the Cooper Test in Lusaka, with 37 successfully passing the assessment.

He said the achievement was a boost for the province and would create opportunities for the successful officials to officiate in higher leagues.

“This achievement fills us with joy and confidence, knowing that many of them will now have opportunities to officiate in higher leagues,” Nyirenda said.

He added that the success would also benefit the province’s Zambia Premier League representatives through access to high-standard officiating.

Nyirenda further disclosed that the FAZ National Office had made a part payment towards officiating fees owed to male and female match officials for the 2025/26 season.

“We remain hopeful that the remaining dues will be resolved in due course,” he said, while thanking match officials for their patience and professionalism as their concerns were being addressed.

Meanwhile, Nyirenda said the province’s leagues were in full swing and praised clubs and supporters for contributing to a positive football environment while maintaining good sportsmanship.

He, however, issued a strong warning over alleged attempts by some individuals to manipulate matches.

“To put on record, we are actively pursuing a few individuals at known clubs who have been in the habit of manipulating games,” Nyirenda said. He described match-fixing as a serious matter and insisted that the association would not tolerate the practice at any level.

“Let it be clear: match fixing is a very serious matter, and we will not condone it at any level or by anyone. Those involved must know that their days are numbered,” he said.

Nyirenda said safeguarding the integrity of football required collective commitment from clubs, officials, players, supporters and administrators.

“Football thrives on honesty, and we will defend that principle with unwavering resolve,” he said.

He also called on stakeholders to build on the successes recorded during the recent transfer and registration window while strengthening football structures and promoting fair competition.

Nyirenda said the association remained committed to ensuring that football in Eastern Province continued to be a source of pride and maintained high standards of integrity.

GHANA SUFFER HEAVY DEFEAT TO ECUADOR IN U-20 WOMEN’S WORLD CUP OPENER

By CAF Media



Ghana made a difficult start to their FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup campaign after suffering a 3-0 defeat to Ecuador at the Arena Sosnowiec in Poland on Sunday.

Ecuador took control of the Group C encounter early, with Rosa Flores opening the scoring after just four minutes with a spectacular long-range effort.

Flores struck from nearly 40 metres, lifting a left-footed shot over Ghana goalkeeper Najat Salam to give the South Americans the perfect start.

Ghana attempted to respond and came close through Agnes Yeboah, whose effort struck the post, but Ecuador remained the more dangerous side.

Their pressure paid off again in the 17th minute when Flores turned provider, delivering a well-weighted pass for Domenica Arboleda to double the lead.

Ghana struggled to find a way back into the match despite showing greater resistance after the break.

Ecuador eventually sealed the victory with 20 minutes remaining when Arboleda scored her second goal of the game to make it 3-0.

MUCHOMA COMPLETES COMMONWEALTH SPORT INTERNSHIP

By Lucky Chama



Elizabeth Muchoma has completed her tour of duty at the National Olympic Committee and Commonwealth Games Association of Zambia (NOC/CGA Zambia), marking the end of her year-long internship under the Commonwealth Sport eQUIP Programme.

Muchoma joined the NOC/CGA Zambia Secretariat in 2025 as an Assistant Media and Communications Officer, where she supported the organisation’s media and communications activities during her internship.

NOC/CGA Zambia Secretary General and CEO Boniface Kambikambi congratulated Muchoma on successfully completing her assignment and commended her contribution to the Secretariat.

Kambikambi also assured Muchoma that the NOC/CGA Zambia remains her home, noting that the organisation has maintained strong relationships with previous interns after completing their assignments and moving on to new opportunities.

In her farewell message, Muchoma thanked NOC/CGA Zambia for giving her the opportunity to serve at the Secretariat and gain valuable professional experience.

She said the internship enabled her to develop her skills, acquire practical knowledge and contribute to the work of the Olympic and Commonwealth Movement in Zambia.

The Commonwealth Sport eQUIP – Empowering Youth Programme is a Commonwealth-wide initiative designed to develop young leaders through internship and employment opportunities.

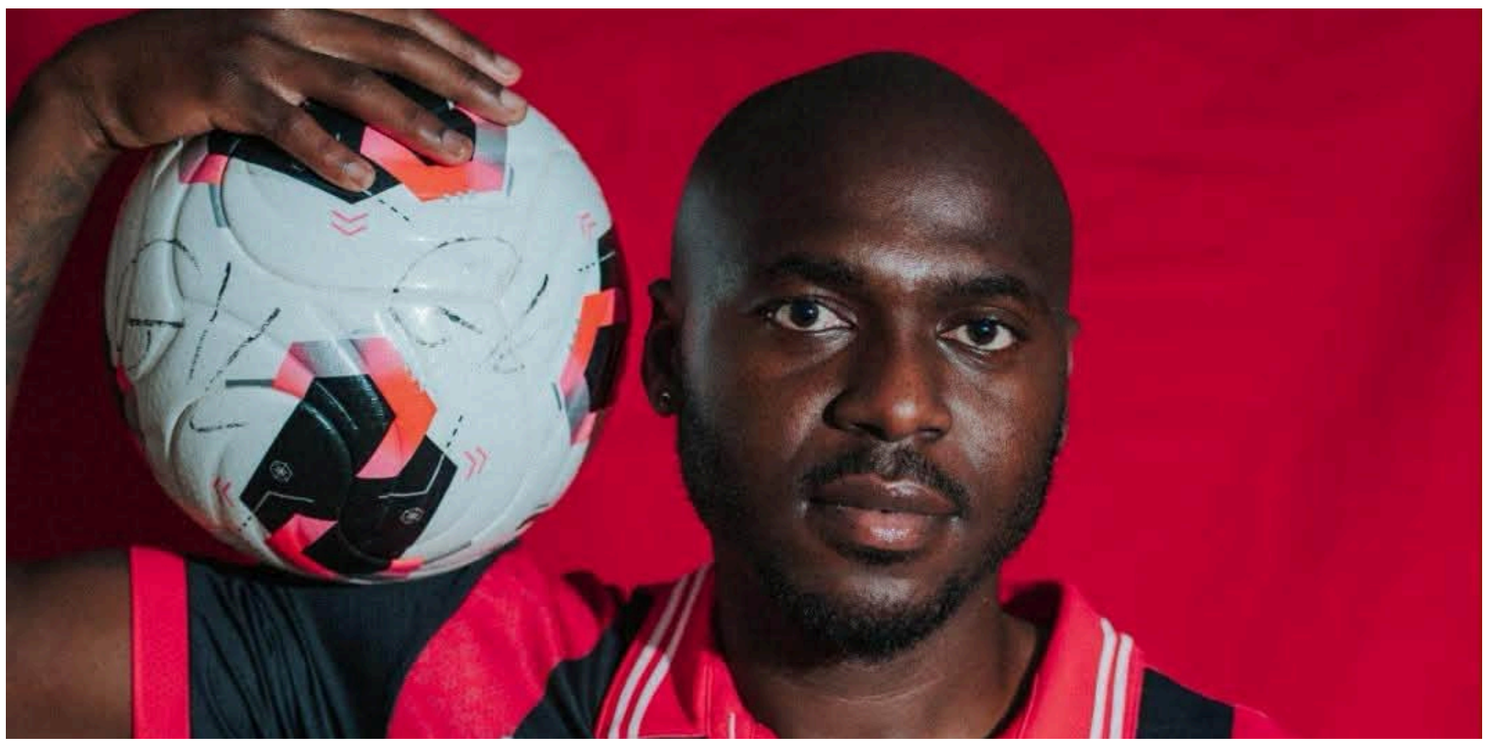
The programme provides practical work experience, professional development and educational opportunities through year-long placements with Commonwealth Games Associations.

It is aimed at strengthening young people’s employability and career advancement while building youth networks and empowering participants to contribute positively to sport and their communities.



CHILUFYA JOINS HAPOEL JERUSALEM ON LOAN

By Lucky Chama



Zambia winger Edward Chilufya has joined Israeli top-flight side Hapoel Jerusalem FC on a season-long loan deal from Danish club FC Midtjylland.

The move sees Chilufya begin a new chapter in his career as he takes on a fresh challenge in the Israeli Premier League.

Confirming the move on his Facebook page, Chilufya said he was delighted to join Hapoel Jerusalem and is looking forward to making an impact at his new club.

"A new chapter begins.

"I'm delighted to join Hapoel Jerusalem on loan and I'm looking forward to embracing this new challenge, working hard, and giving my best for the club."

The 26-year-old also expressed his appreciation to FC Midtjylland for their continued support during his time with the Danish side.

"Thank you to everyone at FC Midtjylland for their continued support. I'm excited for what lies ahead and ready to get to work."

Chilufya concluded his message with a determination to maintain his ambitions despite the change of league and club.

"New league. New challenge. Same ambition."

THIS COULD BE YEAR I WIN BALLON D'OR, SAYS MBAPPE

By BBC Sport



Real Madrid forward Kylian Mbappe says this could be a good year for him to win the Ballon d'Or for the first time.

The 27-year-old scored 42 goals in 44 games for his club last season but they did not win any trophies.

He won the World Cup Golden Boot with 10 goals, taking his career tally at World Cups to a record 22 - although France finished fourth.

"I think when you play for Real Madrid, the best club in the world, people associate you with this award," he said.

"There are many people that speak about me and the Ballon d'Or. Of course I've made history in the most important competition. Maybe it's a good year for this but people can vote according to what they think."

He added: "I always think I'm the best [player in the world] but everyone has their own opinion.

"Maybe people think different ways. I don't think it's a discussion we need to have.

"Of course this year could be good for me to win the Ballon d'Or. But journalists vote."

The highest Mbappe has finished in the Ballon d'Or rankings is third in 2023, when he was a Paris St-Germain player.

Three players are given shorter odds with the bookmakers to win the Ballon d'Or, which will be awarded on 26 October.

England captain Harry Kane is odds-on to win, after a club-record 61 goals in 51 games for German double winners Bayern Munich last season. He also scored six times at the World Cup.

Lamine Yamal, who won La Liga with Barcelona and the World Cup with Spain, is second favourite - followed by his club and international team-mate Rodri, formerly of Manchester City.

'I really don't care' - Mbappe on PSG success after his exit

Mbappe, who started his career at Monaco, is the all-time top scorer for both PSG, with 256 goals in 308 games, and France, with 66 in 106.

He has netted 90 goals in 107 matches for Real Madrid but is yet to win a major trophy in two years at the Bernabeu.

On a personal basis, he has won eight consecutive league golden boots - six in Ligue 1 and two in La Liga - plus two in World Cups and another two in the Champions League.

He won the 2018 World Cup with France, but on a club level he has yet to win the Champions League.

PSG, who had never lifted the trophy before, have won it both seasons since Mbappe departed.

"I can't change it," he said of his former club's success without him.

"The truth is that I really don't care. I know how to analyse football, I know why."

AFRICA READY TO FLY THE FLAG AT FIM INTERCONTINENTAL GAMES IN BRAZIL

By Enock Phiri

FIM AFRICA

FIM AFRICA

FIM Africa is set to showcase some of the continent's finest motorcycle racing talent when the second edition of the FIM Intercontinental Games takes place in Brazil from 10 to 13 December 2026.

The prestigious event will be staged at the Autódromo Internacional Ayrton Senna in Goiânia, bringing together riders representing the six FIM Continental Unions (CONUs).

Africa will field teams in Supersport 300 (SSP300), Supersport and MX2, with riders from five African countries coming together under one continental banner.

The 2026 edition will also make history with the introduction of motocross to the FIM Intercontinental Games, with the discipline making its debut in the MX2 category.

FIM Africa President Marco Comana described the selection as an important moment for African motorcycle racing, particularly with riders from different countries joining forces to represent the continent.

"We have riders from five African countries coming together as one team, which is exactly what an event like this is about," Comana said.

He added that the inclusion of motocross presents another opportunity to expose African talent to the international stage.

MONONYANE TO LEAD SSP300 CHARGE

South Africa's Kgopotso 'KJ' Mononyane has been handed the responsibility of captaining the African SSP300 team.

He will be joined by Egypt's Mahmoud Elbanna and South Africans Diego De Ponte and Abigail Bosson.

The quartet will carry Africa's hopes in the highly competitive SSP300 category as they go up against riders from the other continental unions.

PURIFICATI TO CAPTAIN SUPERSPORT TEAM

South Africa's Nicole Purificati will lead the African Supersport line-up.

Purificati will be supported by compatriots Oratilwe Phiri and Dominic Doyle, alongside Angola's Sidney Pinto.

The team brings together experience and emerging talent as Africa looks to make its mark in the circuit racing competition.

ZAMBIA FEATURE IN HISTORIC MX2 TEAM

The biggest milestone for Africa will come in motocross, where the MX2 category makes its FIM Intercontinental Games debut.

South Africa's Cameron Durow will captain the historic team, which includes compatriots Trey Cox, Uganda's Milton Obote Akaki and Zambia's Caitlin Ann Parkes.

Parkes will be part of the team that writes the first chapter of motocross history at the Games, as the MX2 riders become the first competitors to take part in a motocross competition at the FIM Intercontinental Games.

EXPERIENCED SUPPORT TEAM

Behind the riders will be a continental support structure featuring mechanics from Angola, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia.

The support crew consists of Ricardo Morais, Damion Purificati, Victor Keswa, Armando Borges, Andrew Cox, Natasha Rugani, Yasin Semakula and Stewart Parkes.

Jesse Boshoff will serve as Team Manager for Circuit Racing, while Razafimahefa Rakotomanga Fanomezantsoa Tsiravanavalona takes charge of the Motocross Team.

The circuit racing competition will be staged on the 3.835-kilometer, 12-turn Autódromo Internacional Ayrton Senna, while motocross will form part of the expanded programme for the first time.

For FIM Africa, however, the Games represent more than competition.

It is an opportunity to bring riders from different parts of the continent together, compete as one unit and demonstrate the depth of African motorcycle racing talent on the global stage.

With Brazil now in sight, the message from the continent is clear:

Africa is ready to race, compete and fly the flag proudly in Brazil.