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CHIPOLOPOLO CAPTAIN BACKS ZAMBIA TO TARGET VICTORY AGAINST ALGERIA IN AFCON QUALIFIER

By Enock Phiri



Chipolopolo captain Fashion Sakala says Zambia must start their 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying campaign with a victory when they face Algeria away on 25 September.

Sakala was speaking after the team's training session at Nkoloma Stadium, where interim coach George Lwandamina continued preparations ahead of the Group I assignment.

Lwandamina said the initial sessions had focused on bringing the players together physically and tactically, with the technical bench using a training match to assess the squad.

"We were trying to put them together in terms of fitness," Lwandamina said.

"We gave them a test and we have been working on corporate fitness, and today we ended up with a game just to see how we can push the ball around."

The coach was encouraged by what he saw from the players currently in camp but said the technical team was still waiting for the remaining group of players before forming a complete picture.

"The picture looks so well for those who are here now. We have to wait for the other group to make a full picture. They have done well; now we have to wait for the other group and see how they will integrate."

Lwandamina also made his intentions clear ahead of the qualifiers.

"We go into games to win, and we are not exceptional."

He added that the location of a victory would not matter as long as Zambia collect the result.

"A win is a win, be it home or away, and it's good for the country. I'm sure we have the base and the core of the team which were there, and these are the ones which are here again, so we just hope for the best."

With finishing an area the team continues to work on, Lwandamina said preparations would continue until the players are ready for competitive action.

"Training will never end. We shall continue training them until they become ready and start scoring."

For Sakala, however, the focus is already firmly on Algeria.

"We have had a very good camp and our first target is the Algerian game. I think we are very much ready and obviously we are going to have the best preparations there in Algeria," Sakala said.

"I think we are going to have a full squad. We are very much ready and excited for this game."

The captain believes Zambia must approach the match with an attacking mentality if they are serious about reaching the 2027 AFCON finals.

"We are very excited, but the most important thing, if we want to qualify for the AFCON, we have to start winning games. I think we should go there to win the game."

"We are very confident that we are going to give our very best and get the three points because that is what we want."

Sakala also welcomed the presence of younger players in the national team, saying the senior members have a responsibility to help them settle into international football.

"It's always important to have young players in the team. I think they are the future of the Zambian national team. We were once young players as well, and the senior players welcomed us so well. Now it's our time to welcome the young ones."

"We are trying by all means to make sure they feel comfortable and very free. Football is a game of mistakes, and even the senior ones do make mistakes. We are very happy to have them. We encourage them to work hard, and obviously we have to work as a team and win this game against Algeria."

Sakala identified the Algeria fixture as the immediate priority, with Zambia also scheduled to face Togo at home four days later.

"The overall picture, to be honest, is to win these two games. I think that would be very important because we have to advance from this group."

"Each and every player is ready to give their best. Most of our players are playing in their clubs, which is very important for us, and hopefully we can win this game against Algeria. For me, this is the most important game."

The captain also appealed for continued support from the Chipolopolo faithful.

"Like always, we are asking the fans to support us. We will give our best for them. We will make sure that we fight for them on the pitch and definitely try to work extra hard and give them the three points."

On Zambia's recent struggles in front of goal, Sakala remained confident that the goals will come.

"I can't say there is a problem with us scoring. All I can say is there is a phase in the game, but I believe against Algeria we will definitely find goals."

Zambia are in Group I alongside Algeria, Togo and Burundi in the 2027 AFCON qualifiers.

The Chipolopolo travel to Algeria for the opening fixture on 25 September, before hosting Togo on 29 September at Levy Mwanawasa Stadium in Ndola.

FIRST CHIPOLOPOLO CONTINGENT LEAVES FOR ALGERIA

By FT Reporter



The first Chipolopolo contingent has left Lusaka for Algiers ahead of Friday's 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifier against Algeria.

The contingent, made up mostly of local players, four foreign-based players and members of the technical bench, departed Kenneth Kaunda International Airport at 13h00 and is expected to arrive in the Algerian capital tomorrow morning.

Upon arrival, the team will travel to Tizi Ouzou, the venue for Friday's match, located about 100 kilometres from Algiers.

Meanwhile, Egypt-based duo David Simukonda and Pascal Phiri have . become the first Chipolopolo players to arrive in Algeria ahead of the crucial qualifier.

The two players touched down at Houari Boumediene International Airport in Algiers at 11h55 aboard EgyptAir.

They were received at the airport by FAZ Head of Media and Communications Nkweto Tembwe

DAKA BRACE FIRES ZAMBIA TO VICTORY OVER MALAWI

By Lucky Chama



Billy Daka scored twice late in the match to hand Zambia a 2-0 victory over Malawi as the Junior Chipolopolo made a winning start to the TotalEnergies CAF Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations | COSAFA Qualifier Mozambique 2026 in Maputo on Friday.

The record 12-time regional champions were made to work for the points, with the Group C encounter remaining goalless until the final 10 minutes at Zimpeto Stadium.

Daka finally broke the deadlock in the 80th minute, giving Zambia a crucial lead after a closely contested encounter.

Malawi pushed for an equaliser, but the Junior Chipolopolo held firm before Daka struck again eight minutes into stoppage time to complete his brace and seal all three points.

The victory also avenged Zambia's 2-1 defeat to Malawi in the semi-finals of last year's regional championship in Namibia.

Zambia's opening win provides an important platform as the team seeks to reclaim the COSAFA Under-20 title, having last lifted the trophy in 2022.

The 12-team competition runs until September 27, with the three group winners and the best runner-up advancing to the semi-finals. The two finalists will qualify for the TotalEnergies CAF Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations Ghana 2027.

Earlier on Friday, Namibia edged Mauritius 1-0 in the opening Group A fixture, with captain Lukas Sakeus scoring the only goal in the 43rd minute.

Hosts Mozambique also made a winning start, defeating Seychelles 4-1 in the second Group A match.

Seychelles took an early lead through Eriano Rajabary, but Mozambique responded through Fanuel Macuácua, before Alírio Cuna scored twice. Faizal Abdala added the fourth goal to complete the comeback.

Namibia will next face hosts Mozambique on Sunday, while Mauritius will meet Seychelles earlier the same day.

Meanwhile, Zambia has shifted its focus to Comoros after making a winning start to the TotalEnergies CAF Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations/COSAFA Qualifier with a 2-0 victory over Malawi.

The Junior Chipolopolo Boys opened their Group C campaign on Friday at Zimpeto Stadium in Maputo, Mozambique, with substitute Billy Daka scoring both goals to secure maximum points.

Coach Perry Mutapa and his technical bench have since turned their attention to Monday's encounter against Comoros, with the team fine-tuning its preparations in all areas.



COPPER QUEENS TO PLAY DENMARK IN INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY

By Lucky Chama



Zambia will play FIFA World Cup-bound Denmark in an international friendly on December 5, 2026, in Esbjerg, Denmark.

The Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) has confirmed that the Copper Queens will face Denmark at 14:00 local time as part of the European side's preparations for next year's FIFA World Cup in Brazil.

FAZ General Secretary Charles Chakatazya said the fixture demonstrates the growing international interest in the Copper Queens.

"We are excited as FAZ that we continue to attract top level invitations for international friendly matches which shows great confidence and respect for the Copper Queens across the globe," Chakatazya said.

He said Denmark wanted to use the fixture to gain experience against African opposition ahead of the World Cup, while Zambia would use the match to maintain international competition as preparations for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic qualifiers continue.

"Denmark is looking to experiencing African opposition as part of the preparations for the FIFA World Cup next year in Brazil. For us this will help us keep our team engaged especially with qualifiers for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics in motion," he said.

Chakatazya said the Copper Queens' recent participation in the FIFA Series and WAFCON would be followed by the Olympic qualifiers as the next major assignment.

"This is part of our plan to regenerate the Copper Queens after the recent slumps at the WAFCON which extinguished our World Cup dream. The Denmark friendly is an opportunity to set our sights on new targets," he said.

Denmark coach Jakob Michelsen also welcomed the fixture, saying it would give his team an opportunity to test themselves against opposition from another part of the world before the World Cup.

"The two upcoming camps give us the chance to test ourselves against national teams from other parts of the world before the World Cup in Brazil kicks off," Michelsen said.

He added that Denmark were pleased to host Zambia in Esbjerg in December and hoped for strong support from their fans.

The Copper Queens are currently preparing for their first-round Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games qualifier against Uganda, which will be played over two legs from October 5 to 13.

The Denmark friendly will provide Zambia with another international test as the team begins preparations towards its next major competitive assignment.

MUSHIPI TARGETS IMPROVED RESULTS AS ZAMBIA ATHLETICS INTERIM COACH

By Lucky Chama



Newly appointed Zambia Athletics interim national team coach Sydney Ackim Mushipi says he is ready to use his experience in athlete development to help Zambia become more competitive on the international stage.

Mushipi was appointed interim national team coach following an announcement by Zambia Athletics Association General Secretary Teddy Shimishi.

The former National Youth Director and Development Manager says taking charge of the senior national team is both an honour and a responsibility.

"It is a moment of great honour and humility. To be entrusted by Zambia Athletics to lead our national team is not just a personal achievement, but a call to serve the nation," Mushipi said.

"I receive this appointment with Discipline, Loyalty and Patriotism. I feel the weight of the responsibility, but also the confidence that comes from years of preparation - from Zone VI Games to Youth Olympics, Commonwealth Youth Games and All Africa Games. I am ready to serve."

Mushipi believes his previous work with the national youth programme provides a strong foundation for his new role, particularly in connecting athlete development with senior-level performance.

"Serving as National Youth Director and Development Manager was a foundation. It taught me where our future lies - in the youth," he said.

"This transition is a natural progression from building the base to leading the top. It means continuity."

He said some of the athletes he worked with at junior level have now progressed into senior competition, providing an opportunity to take them further in their careers.

"The athletes I nurtured from Mauritius 2013, Nanjing 2014, Samoa 2015 and Ndola 2023 are now seniors. Now I have the opportunity to complete their journey from junior promise to senior podium," Mushipi said.

On improving Zambia's competitiveness, Mushipi said he does not intend to overhaul the existing system but rather improve it. "We will not change everything, we will improve our system," he said.

He plans to strengthen the high-performance approach through science-based training, particularly in sprints and hurdles, while extending the approach to other events.

Mushipi also intends to use his experience as a former manager of the Africa Athletics Development Centre in Lusaka and World Athletics lecturer to strengthen coaching standards.

"As Ex Manager of Africa Athletics Development Centre Lusaka and World Athletics Lecturer, I will bring international standards to our coaches. A competitive nation needs competitive coaches," he said.
"Our goal is simple: move Zambia from participation to podium at Region 5, Africa Games, Commonwealth and World level."

Mushipi also supports the Zambia Athletics president's "Catch Them Young" vision, saying early talent identification is key to building a sustainable athletics programme.
"I fully align with the President's vision. Catch Them Young is the only sustainable future," he said.

His plan includes strengthening inter-school and provincial talent identification, using the Africa Athletics Development Centre as a national talent centre and training coaches to identify young athletes between the ages of 12 and 15 across the country.

Mushipi is currently helping prepare Team Zambia U20 for the Region 5 Youth Games in Maputo, Mozambique, this December.

ZAMBIA CROWNED INAUGURAL IHF NATIONS TROPHY CHAMPIONS

By Lucky Chama

Zambia have been crowned the inaugural IHF Senior Women's Nations Trophy champions after defeating Mozambique 26–19 in the final played in Lusaka.

The Copper Queens of handball produced a determined performance to secure victory and complete their tournament campaign with the title on home soil.

Zambia maintained their composure throughout the final, showing discipline, teamwork and fighting spirit to overcome Mozambique and lift the inaugural trophy.

The victory also secures Zambia qualification to both the All-Africa Games and the African Cup.

Charity Phiri was named Player of the Match after producing a standout performance for the champions.

The triumph caps a memorable campaign for the Copper Queens, who now leave the inaugural Nations Trophy as champions and with qualification to two major continental competitions.



ROAD ACCIDENT CLAIMS LIFE OF YOUNG FOOTBALLER

By Lucky Chama



Road traffic accident involving Za Yellow Queens Football Club has claimed the life of young footballer Muyunda Mwengelwa.

The accident happened in the early hours of Saturday shortly after the Kabowa area as the team travelled to Kabwe for their Week Three fixture against Blue Young Stars.

Za Yellow Queens confirmed that Mwengelwa died in the accident, while the rest of the team members were rushed to Kapiri Mposhi Urban Clinic for treatment.

Players who sustained serious injuries were later transferred to Kapiri Mposhi District Hospital.

"It is with sad note to inform the public that in the early hours of today our Ladies Team Za Yellow Queens Football Club was involved in a RTA just after Kabowa area when they were travelling to Kabwe to fulfil their Week 3 fixture against Blue Young Stars," the club said.

"The accident claimed the life of a young promising girl, Muyunda Mwengelwa. The rest were rushed to Kapiri Mposhi Urban Clinic for treatment and others who were seriously injured were transferred to Kapiri Mposhi District Hospital."

The Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) Central Province also mourned Mwengelwa, describing her death as a loss to the football community.

FAZ Central Province said the young player passed away while travelling with Za Yellow Queens for their fixture in Kabwe.

"We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family, Zayellow Queens Football Club, and the wider football community during this difficult time," FAZ Central Province said.

"Her dedication to the game and her contribution to football in Central Province will be remembered with great respect."

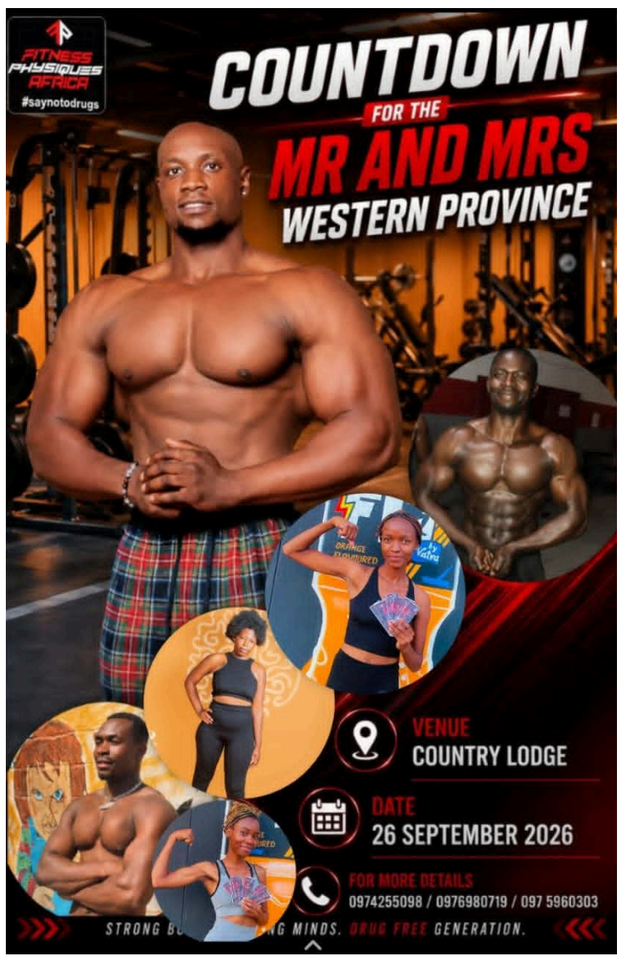
Zambian forward Racheal Kundananji also expressed her condolences to the Mwengelwa family, the injured players, Za Yellow Queens and the wider women's football fraternity.

"It breaks my heart seeing a young athlete lose life before reaching the pinnacle of their career," Kundananji said.

"Muyunda was not just a player; she was a dream, a sister in boots, a daughter of Zambian football whose journey was cut too short. Her passion for the game will forever remain in our hearts."

Kundananji also prayed for strength for Mwengelwa's family and a quick and full recovery for all those injured.

Za Yellow Queens have appealed to the public to keep the team, the injured players and the bereaved family in their prayers during the difficult period.



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FAZ, NORA MUTUALLY SEPARATE

By Lucky Chama



The Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) has mutually separated with Copper Queens head coach Nora Häuptle, bringing her tenure to an end less than two years after her appointment.

FAZ General Secretary Charles Chakatazya said the decision was reached following a meeting between the association and Häuptle's representatives, with both parties agreeing that separation was in their interests.

"FAZ can confirm that it has reached a mutual separation agreement with its senior Women National Team coach Nora Häuptle. After a meeting between FAZ and Häuptle's representatives, it was agreed that in the interest of progress for both parties they had to separate," Chakatazya said.

Chakatazya thanked the Swiss coach for her contribution to Zambian football and wished her well in her future endeavours.

"We would like to sincerely thank Häuptle for her contribution to the Zambian game and wish her all the best in her future endeavours," he said.

FAZ has appointed assistant coach Charles Haalubono to take charge of the Copper Queens on an interim basis as the team prepares for upcoming assignments.

"Considering that we have assignments coming up in the next few weeks, we will allow the assistant coach Charles Haalubono to head the team. FAZ will in due course announce long-term arrangements," Chakatazya said.

Häuptle was appointed Copper Queens coach on January 24, 2025, on a three-year contract.

The mutual separation leaves Haalubono in charge of the team while FAZ considers its long-term arrangements for the senior women's national team.

PERFECTO CHANDA LOSES ANGOLA CUP QUARTERFINAL

By Lucky Chama



Zambian mixed martial artist Perfecto Chanda suffered a unanimous decision defeat to Angola's José Simão in a tough Angola Cup quarterfinal contest.

Chanda opened his campaign strongly against Simão, a Junior Bantamweight gold medallist from the African Championships, and produced an impressive first round.

He landed several heavy shots, showed good control in the wrestling exchanges and produced two outstanding reversals before finishing with an impressive suplex.

However, with about 15 seconds remaining in the opening round, Chanda suffered a groin strike which disrupted his momentum and may have affected him as the contest progressed.

Simão controlled much of the second round after securing a crucifix position, trapping Chanda underneath with his arm controlled.

Chanda spent much of the round defending ground-and-pound and working to improve his position, showing toughness and composure under sustained pressure.

He came out aggressively in the third round and looked to turn the fight around, performing well in the early exchanges before Simão secured a takedown and eventually advanced to mount.

Chanda spent much of the remainder of the round defending from underneath as the contest went the full three rounds, with Simão taking the victory by unanimous decision.

Despite the defeat, Chanda produced a strong showing against a proven continental champion, particularly in the opening round where he demonstrated his striking power, wrestling ability and explosive reversals.

MMA Zambia said it was proud of Chanda and the heart and determination he showed while representing Zambia on the international stage.

15-YEAR-OLD MUTALE MAKES COPPER QUEENS OLYMPIC SQUAD

By Lucky Chama



The Zambia Women's National Team has summoned 33 local players for preparations ahead of the second round of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic qualifiers against Uganda.

Assistant coach Charles Haalubono has included several players who featured at the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) in Morocco, as well as graduates from the junior ranks, as Zambia begins preparations for the upcoming assignments.

Among those called up are red-hot Zesco Ndola Girls forward Eneless Phiri, returning Evarine Katongo and 15-year-old Elite Ladies goalkeeper Winfridah Mutale.

Foreign-based players are expected to join the squad when the FIFA international window opens.

Zambia will travel to Uganda on October 8 before hosting the Crested Cranes a week later at Levy Mwanawasa Stadium in Ndola.

The winner over the two legs will advance to the third round of qualification, with five rounds to be played before a team secures an Olympic qualification place.

Zambia has qualified for the Olympics on two consecutive occasions, beginning with the Tokyo 2020 Games, which were held in 2021. At the tournament, Barbra Banda scored two hat-tricks.

FULL LOCAL SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Chishala Mufunte (Green Buffaloes), Catherine Musonda (Red Arrows), Annie Namonje (Zesco Ndola Girls), Loveness Tonge (Green Eagles), Winfridah Mutale (Elite Ladies).

Defenders: Saliyah Mwanza, Matildah Mukunda (both Elite Ladies), Memory Nthala, Esther Siamfuko, Margaret Gondwe, Rachael Nachula (all Green Buffaloes), Lweendo Hanongo (Driven Queens), Blessings Maluba (Nchanga Rangers), Jackline Chomba, Pauline Zulu (both Zesco Ndola Girls), Justina Zulu, Thelma Chellah (both Zanaco Ladies), Natasha Nkaka (Green Eagles).

Midfielders: Evarine Katongo, Natasha Nanyangwe (Green Buffaloes), Zangose Zulu, Regina Chanda (both Zanaco Ladies), Rhodah Chileshe (Indeni Roses), Avell Chitundu (Zesco Ndola Girls).

Strikers: Maweta Chilenga, Agness Phiri (both Green Buffaloes), Eneless Phiri, Penelope Mulubwa, Charity Mubanga (all Zesco Ndola Girls), Mary Mambwe (Red Arrows), Ngosa Chabwe (Indeni Roses), Ivy Nambeye (Nchanga Rangers), Theresa Nayame (Kansanshi Queens).