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MIDFIELDERS MAKE BETTER COACHES – MUSONDA

Former Zambian midfielder Charles Musonda has argued that former midfielders often possess qualities that can make them effective coaches...

pg 5



Former Zambia international striker Signs Chibambo has criticised the standard of football displayed by Red Arrows and Power Dynamos in the 2026 Samuel 'Zoom' Ndhlovu...

pg 3

MUTAPA DEMANDS SAME INTENSITY AS JUNIOR CHIPOLOPOLO TARGET PERFECT FINISH

Zambia Under-20 coach Perry Mutapa has warned his players against complacency as the Junior Chipolopolo Boys prepare to close....

pg 2



MUTAPA DEMANDS SAME INTENSITY AS JUNIOR CHIPOLOPOLO TARGET PERFECT FINISH

By Enock Phiri



Zambia Under-20 coach Perry Mutapa has warned his players against complacency as the Junior Chipolopolo Boys prepare to close their Group C campaign against Botswana at the TotalEnergies CAF Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations/COSAFA Qualifier in Mozambique.

Zambia have made an emphatic start to the tournament, beating Malawi 2-0 before recording a 3-0 victory over Comoros on Monday. The six points have placed the Junior Chipolopolo at the summit of Group C and secured their place in the semi-finals, but Mutapa wants his side to maintain the standards that have produced two successive clean sheets.

“Going into the game against Botswana, we expect to get three out of three, so any game is not an easy game. So, we don't have to be big-headed or over-confident,” Mutapa said.

“Our aim is to finish on top and obviously do well. Even defensively, we don't have to concede. We want to score more goals and not to concede.”

The coach’s emphasis on another victory reflects the competitive importance of finishing the group strongly. Zambia have scored five goals without conceding in their opening two matches, while their defensive discipline has provided a platform for their attacking players to decide games.

Mutapa, however, expects Botswana to pose a serious challenge despite their failure to win either of their opening matches.

Botswana drew with Comoros before losing to Malawi, but the Zambian coach believes their performances do not accurately reflect the threat they can pose.

“Botswana played a good game against Comoros. As we were analysing Comoros' game, it was a tight game, the first game they played, because we had to analyse Comoros and Botswana,” he said.

“They drew, but it was a good game. Yesterday they lost to Malawi, but it is a good team, so we just have to focus on our strengths and work on our weaknesses.”

That approach could prove important because Botswana enter the fixture with greater urgency. Having yet to register a victory, they need a positive result to keep their own hopes alive, creating a potentially difficult final group match for Zambia despite the Junior Chipolopolo already having secured progression.

Captain Tumelo Mununga, who was named Player of the Match after scoring Zambia’s opener against Comoros, said the individual recognition had provided additional motivation but insisted the team’s focus remains on collective success.

“The game against Botswana, as a team, our expectations is to win, but of course it won't be easy because Botswana hasn't won any match,” Mununga said.

“So, it won't be easy because they will come on us to seek victory, but us, we are focused on winning the match.”

Zambia’s recent record against Botswana provides another source of confidence, with the Junior Chipolopolo winning their last three COSAFA Under-20 meetings. They recorded a 5-0 victory in 2019 before narrow 1-0 wins in 2022 and 2025.

The current tournament statistics also underline the contrast between the two sides. Botswana are yet to score, while Zambia have found the net five times in two games, with Abel Nyirongo among the attacking players who have contributed to the campaign.

Beyond the Botswana fixture, the Junior Chipolopolo will now be looking towards the semi-finals and the larger prize attached to the tournament. The COSAFA competition doubles as the qualification pathway to the 2027 CAF Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations in Ghana, with the two finalists earning places at the continental finals.

A semi-final could potentially put Zambia up against the winner of Group B, where South Africa currently lead with six points after victories over Lesotho and Angola.

For Mutapa, however, the immediate task is straightforward: preserve the winning mentality, maintain the defensive organisation and finish the group stage with another strong performance. The challenge is to ensure that qualification for the semi-finals does not reduce the intensity that has made Zambia one of the standout performers in the group stage.

CHIPOLOPOLO SQUAD COMPLETE AS SINKALA EXCUSED FROM ALGERIA CAMP

By FT Reporter



All players summoned by Chipolopolo coach George Lwandamina have arrived in Algeria as Zambia steps up preparations for Friday’s crucial Group I 2027 Pamoja Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against the hosts.

The final two arrivals, Joseph Liteta and Gampani Lungu, completed the squad’s arrival schedule, with Liteta arriving late on Monday night and Lungu touching down in the early hours of Tuesday.

Lungu travelled straight to the team hotel and joined his teammates for breakfast shortly after his arrival.

Coach Lwandamina has expressed satisfaction with the players’ commitment and attitude since arriving in Algeria, describing their response to the assignment as “encouraging.”

However, the Chipolopolo will be without German-based assistant coach Andrew Sinkala during the current camp after he was excused to attend to personal matters.

“We would have loved to have a full technical bench, but Sinkala called and said he had some personal matters to handle and asked to be excused,” FAZ Secretary General Charles Chakatazya said.

Chakatazya added that former Chipolopolo goalkeeper and 2012 Africa Cup of Nations winner Kennedy Mweene has since joined the technical team.

With the playing squad now fully assembled, Zambia returned training on Tuesday afternoon at Tirsathone Stadium, which has served as the team’s training base during its week-long stay in Algeria.

The Chipolopolo will face Algeria on Friday, September 25, at Stade Hocine Aït Ahmed in Tizi-Ouzou.

Zambia will depart Algeria immediately after the match and return home to prepare for the Group I matchday-two encounter against Togo on September 29 at Levy Mwanawasa Stadium in Ndola.

CHIBAMBO UNHAPPY WITH FOOTBALL DISPLAYED IN CHARITY SHIELD

By Lucky Chama



Former Zambia international striker Signs Chibambo has criticised the standard of football displayed by Red Arrows and Power Dynamos in the 2026 Samuel 'Zoom' Ndhlovu Charity Shield, calling for greater patience, ball retention and tactical intelligence from players.

Red Arrows edged Power Dynamos 1-0 at Nkoloma Stadium in Lusaka, but Chibambo said the match exposed concerns about the mentality and decision-making of players in the local game.

"I just want to talk about the game I was watching, Red Arrows versus Power Dynamos. The game was okay, but that's not a good display," Chibambo said.

He was particularly critical of the first-half performance, arguing that players must understand that their work in training should translate into their approach during matches.

"First half, very bad. Why? Mentality of the players. Players don't know that what they are training is what they will do on the field," he said.

"Training is a prophecy. What you do in training is what you are going to do there."

Chibambo, who was part of Heartland FC's 2009 side that reached the CAF Champions League final, said Zambian players need to make it difficult for opponents to win possession.

"Your opponent should find it difficult for them to get the ball from you," he said. "Make it difficult for your opponent to get the ball. Play more touches."

He urged players to be patient when building attacks instead of rushing their decisions, particularly in the final third.

"This is how we play football. Build up. No rushing. Why do you need to rush?" Chibambo said.

He also emphasised the importance of players scanning their surroundings, supporting teammates after passing and making better decisions before receiving the ball.

"You have to see your partner. Keep the ball. Look around. Don't get the ball if you don't have anywhere to take the ball," he said.

Chibambo further challenged local players to understand the professional demands of top-level football, arguing that football is not only about playing but also about building a career.

"Football is money. Football is business," he said. "First league, you are supposed to be mature. First league, you should be mature."

The former striker, who also played for Nakambala Leopards, ZESCO United, Egyptian side El-Masry, Vietnamese club SQC Binh Dinh, Israeli side Hapoel Ra'anana and Napsa Stars, said Zambia needs a change in mentality if the local game is to develop.

"I want to see Zambian football change the mentality of my players," he said. "I want to see my coaches change the mentality of the players. Let us develop."



CRISTOFORETTI NAMES FINAL SQUAD AS ZAMBIA TARGET DEEPER FUTSAL AFCON RUN

By Enock Phiri



Zambia Futsal National Team coach Andrea Cristoforetti has finalised his 14-member squad for the 2026 Africa Futsal Cup of Nations in Morocco, retaining much of the group that secured qualification and setting the stage for another attempt to make an impact on the continental stage.

The Copper Bullets qualified for the finals after overcoming Ghana 8-6 on aggregate in the final qualifying round, continuing a resurgence that has taken Zambia back to the continental tournament for the second consecutive edition.

For Cristoforetti, the assignment also represents an opportunity to build on his previous experience with the national team. Zambia returned to the AFCON finals in 2024 after defeating Mozambique on aggregate, although the campaign ended in the group stage.

The country's relationship with the competition stretches further back. Zambia first reached the finals in Libya, where the team produced one of its most memorable results with an 8-4 victory over Angola.

The strongest campaign to date came in 2016 in South Africa. Zambia reached the semi-finals before ultimately finishing fourth after a 5-5 draw with Mozambique and a subsequent penalty-shootout defeat.

The challenge in Morocco will be significant, with Zambia drawn in Group A alongside hosts Morocco, Libya and Algeria.

The Copper Bullets will begin their campaign against Libya on October 12 at Salle Prince Moulay Abdellah in Rabat before facing hosts Morocco at the same venue two days later. Their final group match comes against Algeria on October 16 at Salle Ibn Yassine.

The group presents Zambia with three contrasting tests. Libya will provide the opening measure of the team's readiness, before the pressure of facing the home side Morocco and then Algeria in the decisive final group fixture.

The tournament runs from October 12 to 21 and also serves as part of the pathway towards the FIFA Futsal World Cup, increasing the significance of every group-stage fixture.

Cristoforetti has opted for continuity in his final selection, with Lusaka Automotive supplying the overwhelming majority of the squad. The selection includes two goalkeepers, three defenders, six wingers/midfielders and three pivots.

Zambia's final 14-member squad

Goalkeepers
Jackson Chitungu — Lusaka Automotive
Evaristo Mulolo — Lusaka Automotive

Defenders
Chota Chileshe — Lusaka Automotive
Shepherd Kaonga — Lusaka Automotive
Hendricks Chisanga — Mudi Stars

Wingers/Midfielders
Leevan Nyirenda — Lusaka Tigers
James Zulu — Lusaka Automotive
Royd Chishala — Lusaka Automotive
Francis Chinyama — Lusaka Automotive
Patrick Mwila — Paramilitary FC
Charles Simbeye — NAPSA Stars FC

Pivots
Wiseman Phiri — Lusaka Automotive
Patrick Banda — Lusaka Automotive
Musa Chiwaya — Kafue Celtic

With qualification already secured and the squad now confirmed, the focus shifts from selection to execution. Zambia's previous continental campaigns show both the possibility of competing deep into the tournament and the difficulty of converting qualification into sustained progress.

The 2026 finals therefore offer Cristoforetti and his players another opportunity to move beyond the group-stage exit of 2024 and revive memories of the 2016 semi-final run. The first test comes against Libya on October 12.

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MIDFIELDERS MAKE BETTER COACHES - MUSONDA

By Lucky Chama



Former Zambian midfielder Charles Musonda has argued that former midfielders often possess qualities that can make them effective coaches, pointing to Brighton and Hove Albion manager Fabian Hurzeler and Como head coach Cesc Fabregas as examples.

In a reflection on modern football, he said midfielders develop an ability to read the game, create opportunities and think strategically, qualities that can translate into coaching.

"Am starting to believe there's something to what I have always said… the best coaches are often midfielders," he said.

"Midfielders think, create and read the game. Maybe that's what makes them good coaches."

He cited Hurzeler's work at Brighton as another example of a former midfielder making the transition into coaching, while also highlighting Fabregas, who is in charge of Italian club Como.

Musonda also contrasted coaching trends in Europe's major leagues, observing that Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, France, Italy and Germany largely employ coaches from their own countries.

"The Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, French, Italian and German leagues are like African leagues, occupied mostly by their own natives," he said.

He noted that England's top flight is different, with expatriate coaches featuring prominently among Premier League clubs.

The ex-midfielder further linked the changing coaching landscape to the evolution of English football's traditional playing style.

"Only the English league is dominated by expatriate coaches at most clubs. Hence we have lost the culture of kick and rush, though it's still there, but it's now played on the ground," he said.

He pointed to Liverpool's match against Bournemouth as an example of how the traditional English style has evolved, before turning his attention to last weekend's Madrid derby and Manchester United's match against Fulham.

ZAMBIA BAG TWO MEDALS AT EURASIAN DAURIA CUP IN RUSSIA

By FT Reporter



Zambia has finished the international boxing tournament "Eurasian Dauria Cup" in Chita, Russia, with two medals after junior boxers competed against representatives from eight countries.

According to Russian House in Lusaka, Exodus Boxing Club's Daniel Mwanza won a gold medal, while Clement Zulu of Evergreen Boxing Club claimed bronze.

Mwanza's gold medal was the highlight of Zambia's campaign at the tournament, which was held for junior boxers aged 17 to 18 in Chita, a major city in Russia's Far East and the administrative centre of Zabaykalsky Krai.

The young Zambian boxers were accompanied by coach Zimba Dennis and boxing referee Kabwe Darius throughout the competition.

Russian House said the tournament provided the Zambian boxers with valuable international competitive experience while creating an opportunity to strengthen sporting links between Zambia and Russia.

"Participation in a tournament of this level provided the young Zambian boxers with valuable international competitive experience and created another opportunity to strengthen sporting contacts between Zambia and Russia," Russian House said.

The organisation also reaffirmed its commitment to supporting sporting exchanges between the two countries.

"Russian House in Lusaka will continue to support the development of sporting ties between Zambia and Russia, promote contacts between athletes and sports organisations from both countries, and create new opportunities for international exchange and joint sporting initiatives," it said.

The medals add to Zambia's growing participation in international boxing competitions, with the performances of Mwanza and Zulu providing further competitive exposure for the country's emerging boxers.

YOUNG RUGGERS BATTLE IT OUT AT TEULINGS

By Lucky Chama



Young rugby players battled for honours across three age categories as the Teulings Youth Sports Challenge (TYSC) returned to action last weekend, with the 2026 season edging closer to its much-anticipated Grand Finale.

The rugby competition provided plenty of action across the Under-12, Under-14 and Under-17 categories, giving the youngsters another opportunity to test their skills and gain valuable match experience.

In the Under-12 category, DVDC edged Lions 20-15, while Mt Sharks defeated Chibolya 25-15. Lions bounced back to beat Chibolya 30-25 before Sharks secured a narrow 25-20 victory over OYDC.

The Under-14 category also produced competitive encounters, with Chazanga recording a convincing 35-15 win over Lions, while DVDC overcame Chibolya 26-20.

In the Under-17 competition, Mt Sharks defeated Kasis 27-10, while OYDC secured a 17-12 victory over Kasis.

The results highlighted the growing competitiveness of the youth rugby programme, with the teams continuing to build experience and develop their skills as the season approaches its decisive stage.

The TYSC programme also featured Beach Volleyball and Taekwondo, providing young athletes from different sporting disciplines with opportunities to compete and develop.

Beyond the results, the competition continues to provide a platform for young athletes to develop discipline, teamwork, respect and fair play through regular competitive sport.

With the 2026 season moving towards its conclusion, attention now turns to the remaining fixtures and activities before the Grand Finale brings this year's Teulings Youth Sports Challenge to a close.



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GREEN BUFFALOES, LEOPARDS REMAIN UNBEATEN IN ZAVA WEEK 10

By Lucky Chama



Green Buffaloes and Leopards emerged as the only unbeaten teams as the Zambia Volleyball Association (ZAVA) National Volleyball League Week 10 women's matches concluded at Wanderers Courts in Ndola.

The three-day competition featured 10 matches, with both Green Buffaloes and Leopards recording two victories from two games.

Defending champions Green Buffaloes opened their weekend with a 3-0 win by forfeit over Nkwazi on Saturday before completing a perfect weekend with a straight-sets victory over Solwezi Ackers on Sunday, winning 25-12, 25-18, 25-18.

Leopards also produced an impressive display, defeating Solwezi Ackers 3-0 (25-17, 25-20, 25-17) on Saturday before claiming the weekend's headline result with a 3-1 victory over Falcons VC.

Leopards took the first two sets 25-17 and 25-22 before Falcons responded by winning the third set 25-13. Leopards, however, held their nerve to take the fourth set 25-23 and seal the match.

Falcons were the busiest team over the weekend, playing four matches. They began with a 3-0 victory over Solwezi Ackers on Friday, winning 25-18, 25-23, 25-16.

They followed that with a forfeit victory over Nkwazi and a 3-0 win against Red Arrows (25-23, 25-11, 25-20) on Saturday before suffering their only defeat of the weekend against Leopards.

Solwezi Ackers recovered from two opening defeats to claim a 3-0 victory over Red Arrows (25-17, 25-21, 25-21) before being awarded a forfeit win over Nkwazi on Sunday.

It was a difficult weekend for Nkwazi, who forfeited all four of their scheduled fixtures, while Red Arrows managed one victory through a forfeit against Nkwazi after suffering defeats to Solwezi Ackers and Falcons.

Attention now turns to Week 11 in Lusaka, before the league concludes at OYDC Lusaka during the Independence holiday.

MUFULIRA LEAD NATIONAL LEAGUE AS BUFFALOES DOMINATE WOMEN'S STANDINGS

By Lucky Chama



Mufulira Leopards continue to lead the Zambia Rugby Union National League standings after 11 matches, while Green Buffaloes are setting the pace in the Women's League.

Mufulira have collected 45 points from 11 games, having won nine and lost two. They have scored 256 points and conceded 130 for a points difference of 126.

Green Buffaloes are second on 36 points from 11 matches, with seven wins, one draw and three defeats. Red Arrows and Nkwazi are tied on 34 points, although Arrows have played nine matches compared to Nkwazi's 10.

Arrows have seven wins and two defeats, while Nkwazi have six wins, two draws and two defeats.

Diggers occupy fifth position on 24 points, followed by Eagles on 19, Kansanshi on six and KPF at the bottom on one point.

In the Women's League, Green Buffaloes have established a commanding position at the top, winning all eight of their matches to accumulate 39 points.
Red Arrows are second on 27 points from eight matches, while Mufulira Leopards sit third on 22 points after nine games.

Eagles are fourth on 20 points, followed by Diggers on three points and Kansanshi Dragons at the bottom on minus one point.

Meanwhile, the President's League remains closely contested at the top, with Lusaka and Nchanga level on 27 points after eight matches.

Lusaka occupy first place on points difference, having recorded six wins and two defeats, while Nchanga have five wins, one draw and two defeats.

Konkola are third on 26 points, just one point behind the leading pair, with five wins and three defeats.

Roan Antelope are fourth on 22 points, followed by Ndola on 13, while Chibuluma remain without a win and sit bottom on minus one point.

The latest standings point to a closely fought campaign across the three competitions, with several teams still within touching distance of the leaders.

MALUNGA HAILS YOUNG BOXER MULENGA'S PROGRESS IN SCHOOL, BOXING

By Lucky Chama



Oriental Quarries Boxing Promotions (OQBP) promoter and manager Christopher Malunga says young boxer Joseph Chiti Mulenga is making impressive progress both academically and in the ring.

Malunga says Mulenga obtained five distinctions, two merits and one unsatisfactory result out of eight subjects in his latest school examinations.

He says the results are a major improvement for the young boxer, who is currently attending Chilenje B Secondary School.

"We are very happy with his progress and improvement in school," Malunga said.

Mulenga came through the Talent Identification Programme (TIP) conducted by OQBP and sponsored by the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts.

Malunga said Mulenga had previously stopped school at Grade 9 without sitting for his Grade 9 examinations before being given an opportunity to resume his education.

"We decided to give him another opportunity by enrolling him to start Form 1, which was Grade 8 under the previous education system. Today, we are seeing the benefits of that decision," he said.

Malunga also described Mulenga as a well-behaved young man and said OQBP intends to provide him with specialised academic support in subjects where he is showing the greatest potential.

"Joseph is a well-behaved young man, both at home and at school, and this is something that makes me very proud," he said.

In boxing, Malunga said Mulenga has also made significant strides under the guidance of coach Michael Zulu.

"Under the guidance of his coach, Michael Zulu, I can see the potential of a future champion in this young man," Malunga said.

He said OQBP will continue supporting Mulenga's education while developing his boxing career, stressing the importance of combining sport with education.

"Our belief at OQBP is that education and sport must go hand in hand. We want our young boxers to have a future both inside and outside the ring," he said.

Malunga further commended the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts for its support and said the introduction of free education has created opportunities for young people who might otherwise have been left behind.

He has also called on boxing promoters, coaches and managers to encourage young athletes in their stables to return to school and continue their education.

"As we develop boxing talent in our communities, we must also develop educated and responsible young citizens," Malunga said.