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CHIPASULA OUT AS ZAMBIA U17 NAMES COSAFA SQUAD

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CHIPASULA OUT AS ZAMBIA U17 NAMES COSAFA SQUAD, EYES TITLE DEFENSE WITHOUT STAR FORWARD

By Lucky Chama



Mercy Chipasula will not be captaining Zambia's U17 Women's National Team at the COSAFA Women's Under-17 Championship, which Namibia will host from May 10–17.

Head coach Carol Kanyemba has named a 25-member squad to enter camp on Saturday to prepare for the championship, as the Copper Princesses seek to reclaim the title they won last year.

Fourteen players who were part of the squad that qualified for the FIFA

U17 Women’s World Cup by beating Benin have retained their positions in the squad summoned by Kanyemba.

Chipasula, who scored four goals over two legs, along with Lweendo Hanongo, Hellen Sichamba, Masela Sekeseke, Victoria Mbali, and Loveness Chingwele, will miss the tournament.

The mentioned players will, however, continue to play key roles as pivotal members of Zambia’s U17 World Cup squad.

UK-based midfielder Jessica Choolwe Johnson has been excused to attend to her final-year school commitments. Defender Nana Malanda, who has recovered from injury, has been included as Natasha Nkaka remains sidelined due to injury.

In the COSAFA Women’s Under-17 Championship, the Copper Princesses are in Group B alongside Mozambique and Mauritius. Group A has hosts Namibia, Malawi and Comoros, while Group C comprises Lesotho, Botswana and Zimbabwe.

KONKOLA BLADES POSTPONE BUS HANDOVER CEREMONY AMID ZPL FIXTURE SUSPENSION

By Lucky Chma



Konkola Blades have postponed the scheduled handover of the newly procured bus by their sponsor, Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) Plc, following the suspension of Week 34 ZPL National League matches.

KCM procured a 57-seater bus for the club and planned to unveil it on the day when the team would be crowned as the Zambian Premier League (ZPL) National League 2024/25 season champions at Konkola Stadium on May 3rd, 2025.

Konkola Blades have secured promotion to the 2025/26 MTN Super League season by earning an

unbeatable 69 points.

Konkola Blades Chief Executive Officer Kebby Shampongo explains that the fixture date change has led to the sponsor delaying the bus unveiling until the final match of the season against Young Green Buffaloes.

Sharp Razors' final match will be played at the Konkola Stadium in Chililabombwe.

“With the change of date for the Week-34 fixture by the ZPL management to a later date to be announced, the club's sponsor has

seen it fit to unveil the bus when the club will host its final match of the season and be crowned as champions,” Shampongo stated.

According to a notice issued by the ZPL Chief Executive Officer, Joseph Chimpampwe, the suspension of the final league games is to allow for the completion of the review of all judicial cases that may affect promotion and relegation in the league this season.

“The club will communicate effectively any development regarding these changes,” Shampongo said.

STAGE FRIGHT BLAMED FOR GOALLESS AFCON OPENER, SAYS ZAMBIA U-20 DEFENDER MILIMO NALUMANGO

By Lucky Chama



Zambia Under-20 defender Milimo Nalumango says the team has attributed Sunday's goalless draw against Sierra Leone at the Under-20 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) to stage fright.

The Young Chipolopolo opened their Group A campaign with a goalless draw against the debuting Shooting Stars and will now shift their attention to the match against Egypt this Saturday.

Speaking in an interview, Nalumango says the draw was an eye-opener of what to expect and what is expected of the team going into the match.

"It was a good icebreaker into the tournament. Like, we now know what to expect, the kind of pressure we're going to face on the pitch. So going forward, we should expect a lot more and provide a lot more coming from us," Nalumango said.

The towering defender states that playing with the host team will be tough.

He, however, believes it is an opportunity to show intent to

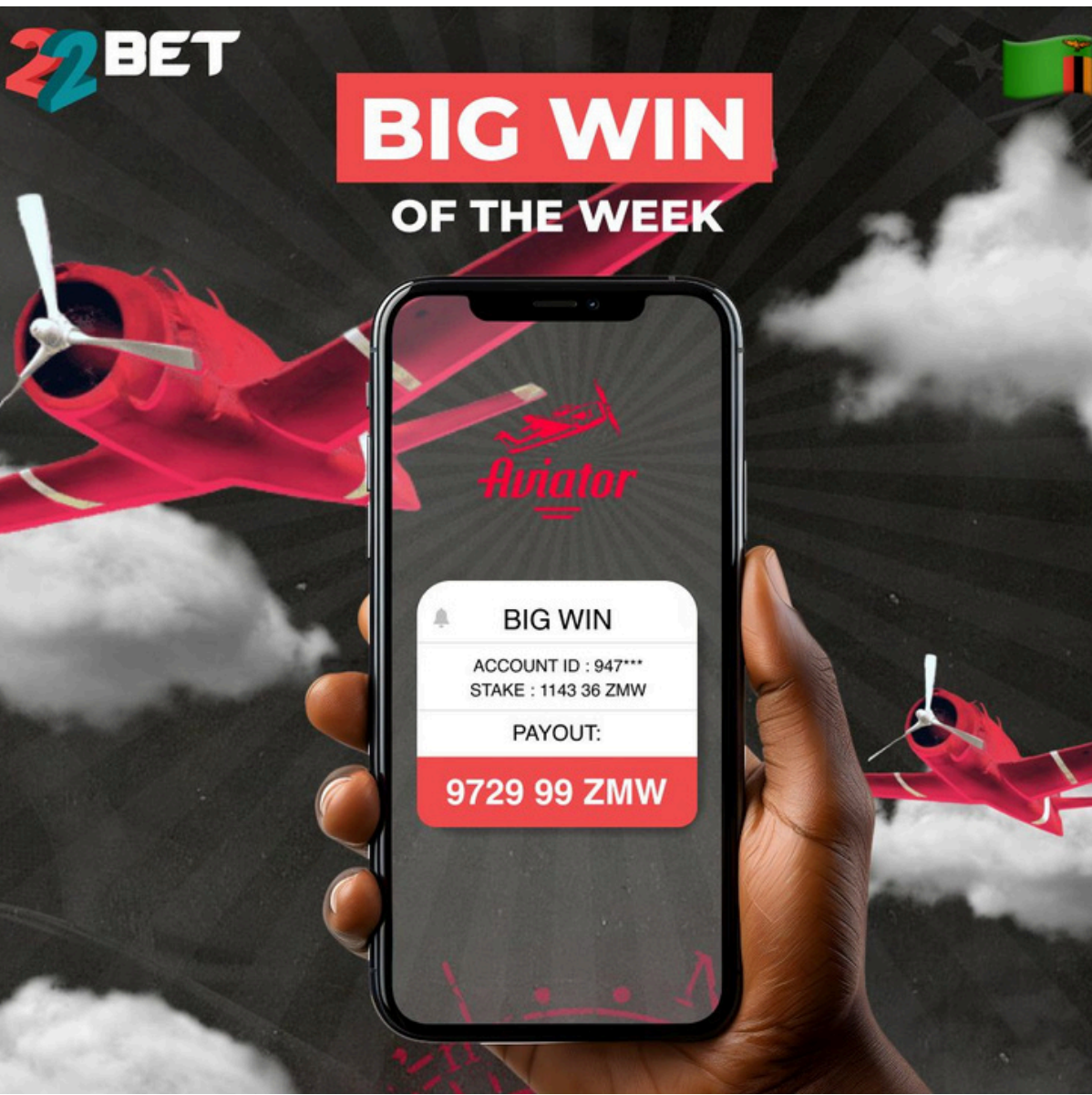
progress further in the tournament.

There's definitely pressure that comes with it. Playing against the host nation is now an opportunity to make a statement as to how we'll approach the tournament. It's definitely going to be a tough game, but a good game as well," Nalumango stated.

Nalumango is optimistic the Boyd Mulwanda drilled side will overcome stage fright in the next match.

"There was a lot of stage fright on the pitch. The nerves hit us, being the opening game of the tournament, the first game being played. There's definitely a lot of nerves. I think we had certain amounts of doubt in each other. But, as the tournament progresses, I think these are things we can use to get over."

Zambia is now fourth in the group with one point after South Africa rebounded from a 1-0 defeat to beat Tanzania 1-0 with Sierra Leone sitting top with four points after thrashing hosts Egypt 4-1 on Wednesday evening.



REDEMPTION IN WINDHOEK: LESOTHO U-17 GIRLS EYE COSAFA GLORY AFTER PAINFUL FINAL LOSS

By Lucky Chama



Lesotho will be looking to improve when they compete in the COSAFA Under-17 Girls' Championship, which will take place from May 10–17 in Windhoek, Namibia.

They made their debut at the previous regional finals in Johannesburg last December, reaching the final before experiencing a humbling 15-0 loss to Zambia.

Lesotho had performed admirably to get that far, giving up just two goals in their four games prior to the final while scoring an incredible 17 goals themselves. However, it was a lopsided final.

They hope to move past what was

obviously a difficult day at the UJ Soweto Stadium, as evidenced by this performance, which highlights their enormous potential.

This year, they are placed in Group C with Botswana and Zimbabwe for the tournament in Windhoek. The top team in each group advances to the semifinals, along with the best-placed runner-up.

Lesotho won their first-ever game in the tournament with a 6-0 victory against Eswatini, despite not participating in the first four editions.

They then achieved a 10-0 victory against Comoros, with Ntsamaeng

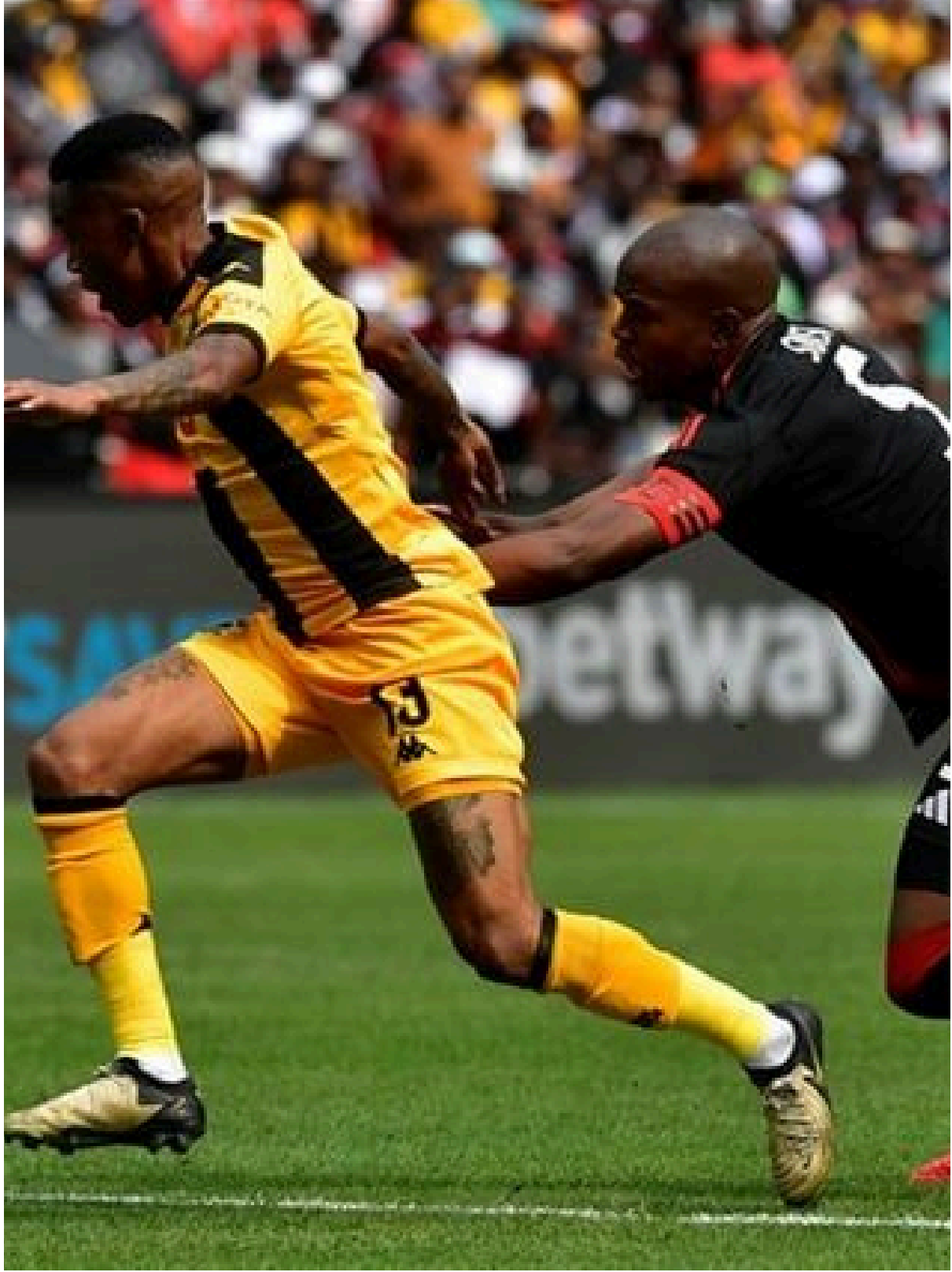
Tholo scoring four goals in that game.

In their final pool match, Lesotho lost 2-0 to Mozambique but secured the position of the best runner-up. As a result, they had a rematch with Mozambique in the semifinals and emerged victorious with a 1-0 win, thanks to a 94th-minute goal by Nteboheleng Sooaane.

Although they progressed to the final, they encountered a strong Zambia team on that day. However, the team gained valuable lessons from the experience and now have their sights set on the gold medal this time around.

SOWETO DERBY SET FOR HIGH-STAKES SHOWDOWN AT FNB STADIUM

By Fulltime Desk



One of South Africa’s most iconic football rivalries will take center stage once again when Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates clash in a Betway Premiership Soweto Derby at FNB Stadium on Saturday, 3 May.

This edition of the derby carries three layers of significance beyond the usual battle for bragging rights.

First, Kaizer Chiefs are desperate to snap a six-game winless streak in the league. Their most recent setback was a 2-1 defeat to Marumo Gallants, leaving them ninth on the table—level on points with eighth-placed Chippa United but behind on goal difference and having played one more match. A top-eight finish, and with it a place in next season’s MTN8, hangs in the balance.

Second, Orlando Pirates are clinging to hopes of chasing down league leaders Mamelodi Sundowns, but those hopes took a major hit on Wednesday night. A 1-0 home loss to Sekhukhune United saw them fall 12 points behind the Brazilians, who have also played two more games.

Third, and most intriguingly, this match serves as a dress rehearsal for the upcoming Nedbank Cup final, where the two teams will meet again on Saturday, 10 May, at Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban.

Chiefs head into the derby with defensive problems. Rushwin Dortley is out for the season, and both Inacio Miguel and Given Msimango remain doubtful. Up front, Wandile Duba will miss out due to suspension after accumulating yellow cards.

Pirates also face a defensive blow, with Nkosinathi Sibisi suspended following a red card in their loss to Sekhukhune United.

Coaches Speak Ahead of the Derby
Kaizer Chiefs coach Nasreddine Nabi expressed concern over his team’s form and mindset heading into the crucial week.

“Sometimes you feel like some players are giving up. We cannot dwell on the past—we have two games that can still save our season. Everyone needs to reflect honestly and come together in preparation,” said Nabi.

“It’s not just the results; we’ve lost our way of playing. That’s what troubles me most.”

Orlando Pirates coach Jose Riveiro lamented his side’s lack of composure following their midweek loss.

“We were in control before the goal, and then everything changed. After Sekhukhune scored, we became disorganised and lacked ideas. The reaction was poor, and we didn’t create enough to earn an equaliser.”

This will be the 79th league meeting between Chiefs and Pirates since 1985. Chiefs hold the historical advantage with 31 wins, while Pirates have 19, and 28 matches have ended in draws.

However, recent form favours the Buccaneers, who have won the last three league derbies in a row. Their most recent victory came in February—a narrow 1-0 win sealed by a last-minute penalty from Patrick Maswanganyi.

With history, pride, league points, and a cup final looming, this Soweto Derby promises to be one of the most emotionally charged in recent memory.

WORLD RUGBY ANNOUNCES OVERHAUL OF SEVENS STRUCTURE

By SuperSport



World Rugby will introduce a new sevens structure in 2026 which will have a three-division regular season and an increased number of events in a bid to make it cost-effective and more competitive, the sport’s governing body said on Thursday.

The updated model will expand the calendar from 10 to 13 tournaments starting next year, with the primary aim of the overhaul being to boost rugby sevens’ global reach ahead of the LA 2028 Olympics.

The season will conclude with three high-profile World Championship Series events, each featuring 12 men’s and women’s teams, to crown the annual world champions.

Rugby sevens was played at the Olympics for the first time at the 2016 Rio Games, with both men’s and women’s contests.

World Rugby Sevens General Manager Sam Pinder said that £10 million will be invested annually to

grow the game, with a large proportion allocated to team participation fees.

"While change can be difficult, this is an evolution that ultimately secures the sustainable advancement of a sport that has proven to be a hit at the Olympic Games, showcasing some of the most gifted athletes on the planet," he said.

UNITED AND SPURS CLOSE IN ON ALL-ENGLISH EUROPA LEAGUE FINAL

By Joseph Tembo



Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur took commanding steps toward securing a place in the Europa League final, after impressive semi-final first-leg victories on Thursday.

United stormed to a 3-0 away win over Athletic Bilbao—who coincidentally host the final at their own San Mamés Stadium on 21 May—while Spurs defeated Norwegian side Bodo/Glimt 3-1 at home in London.

According to Opta, United now have a 97% chance of progressing to the final, with Spurs at 91%. That translates to an 88% likelihood of both sides meeting in what would be only the sixth all-English final in a major European competition. Remarkably, Tottenham have been involved in half of those.

A United-Spurs final would also ensure six English teams in next season's UEFA Champions League, as Europa League winners are

granted automatic entry, regardless of domestic league position. This provision could prove vital for both clubs, with United currently 14th and Spurs 16th in the Premier League, each over 20 points adrift of the European qualification spots.

United's dominant performance in Bilbao saw them dismantle a side currently fourth in La Liga, giving Erik ten Hag's men a clear advantage heading into the return leg at Old Trafford. Meanwhile, Spurs may have more to do in the Arctic Circle, where Glimt boast a 70% home win rate in Europa League games since the 2022-23 season, compared to just 9% on the road.

The prospect of an all-English final adds to a broader storyline for English football this season, as clubs chase an unprecedented clean sweep of European titles. Arsenal remain in the Champions League semi-finals despite a 1-0 home defeat to

Paris Saint-Germain, while Chelsea, playing in the Europa Conference League, cruised to a 4-1 first-leg win over Djurgarden and are among the favorites.

Historically, all-English finals remain rare but memorable. Tottenham featured in the very first, defeating Wolves in the 1971-72 UEFA Cup final. Manchester United and Chelsea played out a dramatic Champions League final in 2008, settled by penalties after a 1-1 draw in Moscow. More recently, the 2019 season delivered two: Liverpool beat Spurs in the Champions League, while Chelsea thrashed Arsenal in the Europa League. In 2021, Chelsea lifted the Champions League trophy again, edging Manchester City 1-0 in Porto.

If current trajectories hold, this season could add another chapter to the growing legacy of English dominance in Europe.

DRAPER SET FOR WORLD TOP FIVE AFTER BEATING ARNALDI

By BBC



British number one Jack Draper cruised past Italy's Matteo Arnaldi 6-0 6-4 to reach the semi-finals of the Madrid Open and will move into the top five in the world for the first time in his career.

Englishman Draper won the first set in just 25 minutes.

World number 44 Arnaldi won his first two service games in the second before Draper made the crucial break with a fierce cross-court winner to take a 3-2 lead.

The 23-year-old Englishman, who won the Indian Wells title in March, then held serve and went on to claim victory in one hour and 17 minutes.

The dominant Draper dropped just 10 points on his serve without facing a break point and will overtake Grand Slam record-holder Novak Djokovic to move into the world's top five on Monday.

Draper, the highest seeded player remaining in the tournament, will face Italy's Lorenzo Musetti or

Canada's Gabriel Diallo in his first ATP clay court semi-final.

Speaking to Sky Sports, Draper said: "I feel stronger every time I play.

"Against these guys I used to feel like I would be the one on the back foot, the one defending, so the next part of my game was getting capable physically to do the things I know I can do and bully these guys.

"I have been doing everything in all areas pretty well and am excited to keep on going. Hopefully it keeps coming together.

"You see guys like Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner have no fear and so I just want to go after it, I suppose.

"My forehand is doing a lot of damage and I want to keep it up.

"I know I can win any match and lose any match. I am fearful I could lose but that helps me compete the way I do."



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