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# ZAMBIA U17 SHIFT FOCUS TO MAURITIUS CLASH

By Joseph Tembo



Windhoek, Namibia – Defending champions Zambia U17 women’s national team kicked off their 2025 COSAFA Girls’ Championship campaign in style with a dominant 4-0 victory over Mozambique on Saturday.

The emphatic win in Namibia was a strong statement of intent from the young Copper Princesses, but head coach Carol Kanyemba believes her side still has more to offer.

“We were hoping to score more than five goals considering the way we had prepared,” Kanyemba said after the match. “We had some bad decision-making in the final third but

what’s important is that we have won the first game.”

Despite the high expectations, Kanyemba expressed satisfaction with the result and praised the development of women’s football back home. “The leagues have really improved in our home country and a lot of girls play regularly. We have regional leagues that help us tap talent from a very young age.”

Zambia’s consistent success in regional youth football, she added, is a result of deliberate investment and development. “The growth of women’s football in developmental leagues has really contributed to us

having a formidable team that can challenge at COSAFA year in, year out,” she said.

Following their winning start, the Copper Princesses turned their attention to recovery and preparation for their second Group B fixture. On Sunday morning, the team held a focused recovery session at Windhoek Gymnasium Stadium under the guidance of Kanyemba and her technical bench.

The session included light stretching, mobility drills, tactical reviews, and team discussions — all aimed at maintaining peak fitness and refining their approach ahead of Tuesday’s clash against Mauritius.

Zambia will face Mauritius on Tuesday, May 13 at 12:00 local time at Hage Geingob Stadium, and the match will be streamed live on FIFA+.

Zambia currently tops Group B after their commanding performance against Mozambique, with the result serving as a key confidence booster heading into the next round of matches.

“First win in the first game is the most important game of the tournament because it sets the pace for us to go into the second game with confidence,” Kanyemba concluded.

# FIFA PRESIDENT GIANNI INFANTINO CONGRATULATES NEW FAZ PRESIDENT

By Joseph Tembo



FIFA President Gianni Infantino has extended his heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected President of the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ), expressing confidence in his leadership and reaffirming FIFA’s support for the development of football in the country.

In a letter addressed to the new FAZ chief, Infantino wrote: “Please accept my warmest greetings and sincerest congratulations for your recent election as President of the Football Association of Zambia.”

Infantino praised the new president’s experience and

dedication to the game, saying, “Your knowledge and leadership, your passion and experience will undoubtedly have an important impact on the development of our beautiful game in Zambia.”

Emphasizing FIFA’s commitment to supporting football growth in Zambia, Infantino added, “Convinced of the potential of football in the country, you can count on my personal support and the help of FIFA to achieve this goal.”

He also offered congratulations to the newly elected Vice-President and Executive Committee members,

wishing the entire leadership team success as they take on their new responsibilities.

“The doors of FIFA are always open if you wish to discuss our sport, its development, and the promotion of its values,” Infantino assured. “I wish you and your team good luck and success for all the challenges that lie ahead, in creating and witnessing a lasting legacy for the future of football in Zambia.”

The message from FIFA underscores international confidence in the new FAZ leadership and sets a collaborative tone for the advancement of Zambian football.

# FAZ PRESIDENT AND HEAD OF STATE APPLAUD ZESCO UNITED SEVENTH ABSA CUP TITLE VICTORY

By Joseph Tembo



ZESCO United were crowned 2025 Absa Cup champions after a dramatic 4-2 penalty shootout victory over defending champions Red Arrows in a tightly contested final that ended 1-1 in regulation time at Levy Mwanawasa Stadium.

The victory marked ZESCO’s seventh Absa Cup title and their first under the leadership of newly elected Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) president, Keith Mweemba. In a congratulatory statement, Mweemba hailed the triumph as a special moment both for the club and his new administration.

“On behalf of myself, the executive committee and the entire football family, I wish to congratulate ZESCO United on winning their seventh Absa Cup title,” said Mweemba.

“Congratulations to the players, technical bench, management and fans on the well-deserved victory.”

He also lauded Red Arrows for their spirited display: “Special recognition to Red Arrows for their hard-fought battle that may not have ended in victory on the day but were worthy finalists.”

Mweemba extended his gratitude to Absa Bank for their unwavering 18-year sponsorship of the tournament, describing the financial institution as “an all-weather partner” to Zambian football.

President Hakainde Hichilema, who attended the match as part of the final leg of his working visit to the Copperbelt, also commended both

teams and emphasized the importance of sports in uniting the nation.

“This afternoon, as we concluded our working visit to the Copperbelt, we took the opportunity to watch the 2025 Absa Cup final between Red Arrows and ZESCO United at Levy Mwanawasa Stadium,” the President posted on Facebook.

“Football, and sport in general, plays a vital role in bringing our society together—a cause our government is dedicated to supporting.”

The Head of State praised Absa Bank’s long-standing commitment to sports development and encouraged other private sector players to follow suit.

“We extend our sincere appreciation to Absa Bank for their steadfast commitment to advancing sports development in our nation,” said Hichilema. “Congratulations to ZESCO United, affectionately known as ZEGA Mambo, for their victory in the 2025 Absa Cup. We also commend Red Arrows for their valiant performance as runners-up.”

FAZ President Mweemba also acknowledged President Hichilema’s consistent support for football, having graced the Absa Cup final for the fourth consecutive year, alongside the Minister of Youth, Sport and Arts, Hon. Elvis Nkandu.

ZESCO United walked away with the K1 million grand prize, capping off a thrilling campaign with yet another piece of silverware for their collection.

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# WOMEN IN FOOTBALL SHINE AT 2024 ZAMBIA ANNUAL SPORTS AWARDS

By Joseph Tembo



The 2024 Zambia Annual Sports Awards (ZASA) celebrated the nation’s top sporting talent on Sunday, 11th May, at a glamorous ceremony held at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka. Hosted by the National Sports Council of Zambia (NSCZ) under the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts, the event brought together sports leaders, athletes, and stakeholders from across the country to honour excellence in Zambian sport.

Women in football dominated the night, with several top accolades going to players and coaches who have made headlines both locally and internationally.

Zambia Women’s National Team captain Barbra Banda was named Sportswoman of the Year following a stellar year in which she led the Copper Queens to Olympic qualification and secured a place at the 2025 Women’s Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON).

Coach Carol Kanyemba, who steered the U17 women’s national team to COSAFA glory and a historic FIFA U17 Women’s World Cup qualification, was awarded Female Coach of the Year.

Her captain, Mercy Chipasula, claimed the Best Young Female Sportswoman of the Year award, cementing her rising star status in Zambian football.

The Zambia U17 Women’s National Team scooped the Best Female Team of the Year award in recognition of their regional triumph and World Cup qualification, while the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) was named Sports Federation of the Year for its continued investment and success in football development.

The event not only honoured achievements in football, but across all sports disciplines, including bodybuilding, athletics, and more.

A night of celebration, ZASA 2024 once again showcased the strength and progress of Zambian sport, with women’s football taking centre stage. The awards underscore a growing recognition of women’s contributions to sport and a bright future for Zambia on the global sporting stage.

# PRISCA CHILUFYA’S LATE HEADER RESCUES POINT FOR ORLANDO PRIDE IN NWSL CLASH

By Fulltime desk



Zambia’s Copper Queens starlet Prisca Chilufya made her mark in the United States’ top-flight women’s football league, scoring a dramatic late equalizer to help Orlando Pride salvage a 1-1 draw against North Carolina Courage in Saturday’s NWSL fixture.

In a tightly contested match played at WakeMed Soccer Park, it was Chilufya’s instinctive header in the dying minutes that brought Orlando level, after trailing for most of the game. The goal was her first since joining the American side and came as a major confidence boost, both for the player and Zambian fans tracking the nation’s exports abroad.

“It is a long-awaited goal,” an elated Chilufya told media after the match. “I feel very happy. I am just looking forward to moments like this when the team needs me most... and pick everybody’s spirit up.”

The 25-year-old forward described her goal as a moment of faith and

foresight. Substituted in during the second half, Chilufya said she followed her coach’s instructions and made a run to the front post where she connected with a well-delivered set piece.

“It may sound crazy, but I envisioned it,” she added. “Like, what if I just jump and flick my head? I did what I was thinking, and with God’s plan, it worked.”

Orlando Pride head coach commended the Zambian international, noting that adjusting to the NWSL takes time, but Prisca’s breakthrough goal may be the spark needed to kickstart her scoring run for the season.

“Thankfully she got that first goal today and hopefully that will continue her momentum,” he said. Chilufya’s performance has excited Zambian football fans, many of whom were also hoping to see fellow national team star Grace Chanda, who was named on the bench but did

not feature.

Despite the Pride’s dominant possession and several clear-cut chances, it took Chilufya’s late heroics to break through North Carolina’s deep defensive block. The result leaves Orlando with a valuable point on the road and sets up Chilufya as one to watch for the rest of the campaign.

Back home, fans and the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) are hopeful that Chilufya’s club success will translate into strong performances for the Copper Queens ahead of the 2025 WAFCON and Olympic Games, where she is expected to play a key role.

Zambia continues to make headlines in global women’s football, with its stars proving they can shine on any stage, from COSAFA to the World Cup and now in the prestigious NWSL.

# MIRACLE CHIPITO STRIKES GOLD AS ZAMBIA SHINES AT 2025 AFRICA MMA CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Fulltime Desk



LUANDA, Angola — Zambia’s Miracle Chipito delivered a sensational performance to win gold at the 2025 Africa Mixed Martial Arts Championships, leading a small but mighty Zambian squad to one of its most impressive continental campaigns yet.

Nicknamed “The Miracle” for good reason, Chipito needed less than three minutes to dismantle Angola’s Helena Josefina Sachilombo in the Flyweight final, earning a thunderous first-round technical knockout (TKO) at exactly 2 minutes and 47 seconds.

“I knew I would finish it in the first round,” said the 25-year-old, her face still glistening with sweat and pride. “I was fighting not just for myself, but for my country, for my sisters, for the girls who don’t always believe in their strength.”

Chipito’s victory capped off a remarkable showing for Zambia at the championships, held from 4-10 May in Luanda, Angola. Despite sending only six athletes—far from a full squad—the Zambian team brought home five medals: one gold, two silver, and two bronze.

Team Zambia’s lone defeat outside the podium was by Killian Lungu, who went toe-to-toe with reigning champion Jeremy Likobele from Congo in a dramatic, high-paced Lightweight contest.

The squad’s incredible medal haul came despite major logistical challenges. Only six airline tickets were provided by the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts, far fewer than the 30 initially pledged. Nevertheless, Zambia’s athletes rose above financial and logistical hurdles to stun the continent.

The Zambia MMA Federation credited critical support from VF Aviation Services, Viva Med Hospital, and Kopola Warriors,

who stepped in with logistical and financial assistance. But federation officials also issued a call to action.

“With greater investment and full government backing, Zambia can dominate Africa and make a real mark on the global MMA stage,” said a federation spokesperson.

Chipito, who now holds a 7-3 record with just one loss in her last eight bouts, is being hailed not just as a champion, but as an inspiration. Her message after victory struck a deep chord:

“This gold isn’t just for me. It’s for every girl in the compounds, the villages, who’s ever been told she’s not strong. Take up MMA—not to fight people, but to fight for your future.”

As the gold medal glistened around her neck in Luanda, Chipito vowed to continue pushing boundaries in the sport and to mentor young women across Zambia. “This is just the beginning,” she said.

With the 2025 World Championships on the horizon, Zambia’s MMA stars have shown that they are no longer underdogs—they are continental contenders.

Zambia achieved a total of four medals at the 2025 Africa MMA Championships. Miracle Chipito won gold in the Women’s Flyweight division. Tryford Mwanga and Mutinta Mweene both earned silver in the Flyweight and Women’s Bantamweight divisions respectively. Jarcel Chimbwe secured a bronze in the Featherweight division. Additionally, Killian Lungu and Nathan Mufwaya delivered notable performances despite not medaling.

A national celebration is expected, with calls mounting for a formal medal ceremony to honour the fighters who flew Zambia’s flag with power, pride, and purpose.



# INTER MILAN CLOSE GAP ON NAPOLI AS SERIE A TITLE RACE HEATS UP

By Fulltime Desk



Inter Milan pulled within one point of Serie A leaders Napoli after a hard-fought 2-0 win over Torino, while Napoli were held to a 2-2 draw at home by Genoa on Sunday, setting up a dramatic finale to the Italian league season.

Inter’s match in Turin was marred by delays, first due to a medical emergency in the crowd and then a thunderstorm that turned the pitch into a waterlogged mess. Nicola Zalewski gave Inter the lead with a stunning 25-yard strike before torrential rain forced an extended 30-minute halftime break.

After referee Federico La Penna deemed the pitch playable, Inter doubled their advantage in the 49th minute when Kristjan Asllani converted a penalty, awarded after Torino goalkeeper Vanja Milinkovic-

Savic brought down Mehdi Taremi in the box.

Despite relentless pressure from Inter and several chances to extend their lead, Milinkovic-Savic made a series of crucial saves to keep Torino in the game. In stoppage time, Adam Masina thought he had scored a spectacular overhead kick, but the goal was disallowed for a foul in the build-up.

The win capped a stellar week for Inter, who earlier edged Barcelona in a Champions League semi-final thriller, progressing 7-6 on aggregate after a 4-3 second-leg victory.

That European triumph briefly saw Inter level with Napoli on 77 points, but Napoli’s later draw against Genoa nudged them back ahead by a single point with two games to

play.

Former Inter striker Romelu Lukaku opened the scoring for Napoli, only for a bizarre own goal from goalkeeper Alex Meret to level the match. Giacomo Raspadori restored the lead, but Genoa’s Johan Vasquez grabbed a late equalizer to frustrate the home side.

Napoli remain in pole position to claim their fourth Serie A title, and second in three years, if they can win their final two matches: away at Parma on May 18 and at home against Cagliari on May 25.

However, if Napoli and Inter finish level on points, a title-deciding play-off will be held to crown the 2024–25 Serie A champions, a rare and dramatic twist in the Italian top flight.

# BARCELONA STUN REAL MADRID IN EPIC COMEBACK TO MOVE CLOSER TO LA LIGA TITLE

By Fulltime Desk



Barcelona produced a sensational comeback to edge closer to the La Liga crown, overturning a two-goal deficit to beat rivals Real Madrid 4-3 in a thrilling Clasico showdown, despite a hat-trick from Kylian Mbappe.

Mbappe struck twice within the first 14 minutes to give Real a flying start, but Barcelona roared back with four goals before the break. Eric Garcia and teenage sensation Lamine Yamal each found the net, while Raphinha bagged a brace to flip the script in a frenetic first half at the Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium.

Mbappe completed his treble with 20 minutes to go, bringing his season tally to 39 goals in all competitions, a new record for a Real Madrid player in their debut campaign. Fermin Lopez thought he had added a fifth for Barcelona late on, but his goal was ruled out for handball after a VAR review.

The victory puts Barcelona seven points ahead of Real Madrid with just three games remaining, leaving them on the brink of reclaiming the La Liga title.

Manager Hansi Flick fielded the same XI that had battled Inter Milan in the Champions League semi-finals midweek, and his side looked sluggish early on. Mbappe capitalized, first converting a penalty after being brought down by keeper Wojciech Szczesny, then finishing

clinically from a Vinicius Junior pass.

But Eric Garcia pulled one back with a header from a corner, and Yamal soon followed with a stunning curling effort into the bottom corner. Raphinha struck twice more before the break, the first after a defensive mix-up, the second following a slick Ferran Torres cut-back, as Barca seized control.

Real Madrid briefly rallied after the interval, and Mbappe struck again to complete his hat-trick and close the gap to 4-3. Still, they couldn't find an equalizer, with substitute Victor Munoz and Mbappe both spurning late chances.

Barcelona had the ball in the net again through Lopez, but VAR intervened, and the goal was disallowed for handball. Regardless, the result sealed a historic fourth Clasico win of the season for Barcelona, matching their feat from the 1982-83 campaign, and highlighting a stark contrast in fortunes between the two giants.

Real Madrid have now shipped 16 goals in four Clasicos this season, underlining their struggles as Barcelona surged ahead in the title race.

Barca can clinch the league title with a win over local rivals Espanyol on Thursday, or if Real Madrid drop points against Mallorca on Wednesday.



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