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# ZAMBIA DRAWN IN TOUGH GROUP ALONGSIDE MOROCCO AND DR CONGO FOR 2025 CHAN

By Lucky Chama



The official draws for the 2025 African Nations Championship (CHAN) have been concluded, setting the stage for an exciting tournament to be co-hosted by Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The Copper Bullets of Zambia have been placed in a challenging Group A, alongside continental powerhouses Morocco and DR Congo, as well as hosts Kenya and Angola.

The draw, which took place on Tuesday, has created intriguing pathways for the participating nations in the tournament exclusively for players competing in their respective national leagues. Zambia's placement in Group A immediately stands out as one of the most competitive pools, promising high-octane clashes from the group stages. Group A Breakdown:

- Kenya (Hosts): Playing on home soil will undoubtedly provide a significant advantage for the Harambee Stars, who will be eager to

make a strong impression in front of their fans.

- Morocco: The two-time CHAN champions, Morocco, will enter the tournament as one of the teams to beat. Their consistent success in recent editions makes them a formidable opponent.

- Angola: A regular participant in the CHAN tournament, Angola possesses a blend of experienced campaigners and emerging talents, capable of causing upsets.

- DR Congo: Another heavyweight in African football, DR Congo boasts a strong pedigree in the CHAN competition, having lifted the trophy on two occasions. Their inclusion in Group A sets up a mouthwatering clash of titans.

- Zambia: The Copper Bullets will need to be at their absolute best to navigate this challenging group. With a history of strong

performances in the CHAN especially in the inaugural tournament, Zambia will be aiming to overcome their formidable opponents and secure a place in the knockout stages.

Other Group Dynamics:

Hosts Tanzania find themselves in Group B alongside Madagascar, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Central Africa. Group C sees fellow co-hosts Uganda pitted against Niger, Guinea, Algeria, and South Africa in another potentially tight pool. Meanwhile, Group D comprises defending Senegal, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, and Nigeria.

The Road Ahead for Zambia:

Chipolopolo's journey in the 2025 CHAN will be a stern test of the local-based talent. Matches against the reigning champions Morocco and the always competitive DR Congo will be particularly crucial in determining their fate in the tournament. The clashes against East African hosts Kenya and fellow Southern African nation Angola will also be vital in the quest for qualification to the knockout rounds.

Coach Wedson Nyirenda and the Zambian team will need to strategize meticulously and ensure peak performance from their players throughout the group stage. The passionate Zambian fans will be hoping their team can rise to the occasion and navigate this tough group to make a significant impact on the tournament co-hosted by their neighbours.

# CHIPATA UNITED GIVEN SURVIVAL LIFELINE AS ZPL AWARDS CRUCIAL POINTS

BY Lucky Chama



Chipata United's hopes of remaining in the ZPL National League have received a significant boost following the latest verdicts issued by the league's governing body. The Eastern Province-based side has been awarded a total of 12 crucial points following successful appeals in two separate cases.

The Zambia Premier League (ZPL) ruled in favour of Chipata United in their appeals against both Jumulo and Leopards Hill. In both instances, the ZPL found that the opposing teams fielded ineligible players in their home and away fixtures against Chipata United during the season. As a result,

Chipata United have been awarded six points for each of these matches, providing a major injection to their survival bid. They have now moved to 35 points.

Meanwhile, in another league decision, Mpulungu Harbour have been awarded three points following the abandonment of their game against Kafue Eagles. The match was abandoned following crowd trouble marred by a heated exchange between the two sides.

These points adjustments have dramatically reshaped the relegation battle as the national league prepares for its final weekend of

action. Chipata United now find themselves in a tense fight for survival alongside Ndola United, Kafue Celtic, Kafue Eagles and Young Green Buffaloes. All the team need at least a win to stay up in the second-tier league.

The final matchday will also determine which three teams will gain promotion to the Super League, with Trident FC, River Plate, and Prison Leopards all vying for a coveted spot in the top flight of Zambian football.

The dramatic turn of events following the ZPL's verdicts has added significant intrigue to the league's conclusion.

# GOVT MOVES TO EVACUATE ZAMBIAN FOOTBALLER KAMPAMBA AMIDST TRIPOLI UNREST

By Lucky Chama



The Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts has issued a statement assuring the nation that it is actively monitoring the escalating unrest in Tripoli, Libya, following disturbing reports of gunfire exchanges between opposing factions in the southern parts of the city.

In a press release signed by Principal Public Relations Officer Nchimunya Bobby Ng'andu, the Ministry confirmed that it has established direct communication with Zambia National team midfielder Kelvin Mubanga Kampamba, who currently plies his trade for Al Madina SC in the Libyan Premier League.

According to the statement, "The Ministry has established direct contact with Mr. Kelvin Mubanga Kampamba, a professional Zambian footballer currently playing for Al Madina SC in the Libyan Premier League. Mr. Kampamba is safe and has expressed his willingness to return home in light of the deteriorating security situation."

Responding swiftly to the concerning situation and Kampamba's

willingness to return, the Ministry has taken immediate action to ensure his safe passage back to Zambia. "In response, the Ministry has formally engaged the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to assist in facilitating the safe evacuation of Mr. Kampamba from Libya," the statement revealed.

The Ministry also appealed to the public and the football fraternity to remain composed during this period. "We urge the public and the football fraternity to remain calm as government institutions work diligently and swiftly to ensure Mr. Kampamba's safe return," the statement read.

Reaffirming its unwavering commitment to the well-being of Zambian athletes abroad, the Ministry emphasized its dedication to their safety and careers. "The Ministry continues to stand with all our sportsmen and women wherever they are in the world and remains dedicated to safeguarding their lives and careers," the statement concluded.

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# FAZ PRESIDENT MWEEMBA CONGRATULATES U17 GIRLS ON COSAFA SEMI-FINAL SPOT

By Joseph Tembo



The Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) president Keith Mweemba has applauded the Zambia Under-17 Women’s National Team for their emphatic performance and qualification to the semi-finals of the 2025 COSAFA Girls’ Under-17 Championship currently taking place in Windhoek, Namibia.

The Copper Princesses stormed into the last four with a commanding 9-0 victory over Mauritius at the Hage Geingob Stadium on Tuesday afternoon, finishing top of Group B with a perfect record. The win not only reaffirmed Zambia’s dominance in the group but also showcased the team’s attacking firepower and hunger for success.

In a statement released by FAZ,

President Mweemba extended warm congratulations to both the players and the technical bench for their exceptional efforts and discipline throughout the group stage.

“Congratulations to the players and technical bench for securing a semifinal spot at the ongoing tournament,” said Mweemba. “We urge you not to be complacent and aim to defend the title to reinforce our status as regional giants.”

Zambia are the reigning champions of the COSAFA Girls’ Under-17 Championship and are targeting a record third title, having previously lifted the trophy in 2021 and again in 2024.

Mweemba also reminded the team

that the COSAFA campaign forms a key part of the preparations for the upcoming FIFA U17 Women’s World Cup scheduled for November 2025.

“Be mindful that this is part of the preparations for the FIFA World Cup in November, so you are encouraged to be at your best,” he added.

The Zambian side, coached by Carol Kanyemba, has been in impressive form, scoring freely and showing signs of depth across all departments.

However, Kanyemba has already called for improved decision-making and better coordination, especially in the attacking third, ahead of the knockout stages.

Zambia will face the winners of Group C, which features 2024 finalists Lesotho, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, in the semi-finals set for Thursday, 16 May at 12h00 CAT.

With two COSAFA titles already in their cabinet and the team’s sights firmly set on reclaiming the crown, the Copper Princesses are expected to approach the next stage with renewed focus and determination.

Zambia remains the most successful nation in the tournament’s history, having emerged champions in 2021 and 2024 since the competition’s inception in 2019.

The road to a historic third title continues, and with the backing of FAZ and the nation, the Copper Princesses carry not just the hopes of victory, but the pride of Zambian women’s football on their shoulders.

# ZAMBIA CRUSH MAURITIUS 9-0 TO SEAL COSAFA U17 GIRLS’ CHAMPIONSHIP SEMIFINAL SPOT

By Joseph Tembo



Defending champions Zambia cruised into the semifinals of the 2025 COSAFA Under-17 Girls’ Championship with a commanding 9-0 victory over Mauritius at the Hage Geingob Stadium on Tuesday afternoon.

The emphatic result secured the Copper Princesses’ top spot in Group B with a perfect record, two wins from two, 13 goals scored, and none conceded. Having earlier defeated Mozambique 4-0, Zambia now prepares for a semifinal clash against the winners of Group C, which will be decided between Lesotho, Botswana, and Zimbabwe.

Hellen Misozi Banda starred with a hat-trick and was named Player of the Match, while Gift Mazimba Chisha, Ruth Mukoma, Esther Makoti, Precious Mwape (brace), and Esther Ngwabe also got on the scoresheet. Zambia took full control from the outset and dominated throughout the 90 minutes.

made an immediate impact after the break, with Makoti scoring just three minutes into the second half.

Mauritius were reduced to ten players in the 52nd minute, and Zambia capitalized with a further flurry of goals, Banda completing her hat-trick (64’, 76’), Mwape scoring twice (73’, 80’), and Ngwabe adding the ninth in stoppage time.

Coach Kanyemba acknowledged the contributions of her defenders, who not only kept a clean sheet but also contributed on the score sheet.

“Our frontline was in too much of a hurry, but the defense made the right choices. We even scored from some set pieces, which shows the defenders played far better than the attack today.”

Looking ahead to Friday’s semifinal, Kanyemba emphasized the need for improved coordination and focus.

# CHIPANAMA UNDERGOES SUCCESSFUL KNEE SURGERY, EYES STRONGER RETURN

By Lucky Chama



Atletico Lusaka Football Club has provided an encouraging update on the condition of their central defender, Simon Chipanama, confirming the successful completion of surgery to repair a medial meniscus tear in his right knee. The injury, a significant setback for the player and the club, occurred at the onset of the 2024/2025 MTN Super League season.

Chipanama sustained the knee injury in October 2024 during a training session, a cruel blow that limited his appearances to just nine Super League matches. Since that unfortunate incident, the resilient

defender has been diligently undergoing physiotherapy under the guidance of Atletico Lusaka’s medical team, spearheaded by Dr. Innocent Mulako, from October 2024 through May 2025.

In a crucial step towards his recovery, Chipanama underwent arthroscopy surgery on May 11th, 2025. Reflecting on this pivotal moment, the player, as quoted by the club’s media, acknowledged the significance of the procedure for his career trajectory.

Looking back at the arduous journey, Chipanama described the

2024/2025 campaign as an exceptionally difficult and emotionally taxing period for him.

However, his spirit remains unbroken, and he conveyed a strong desire to return to competitive action. With characteristic optimism, Chipanama expressed his belief that the upcoming season holds greater promise for both himself and Atletico Lusaka.

The club has reported that Chipanama is showing positive signs in his initial recovery phase. He is now expected to embark on a further 2-3 months of dedicated physiotherapy and rehabilitation. This carefully structured program aims to ensure a thorough and complete recovery, allowing him to return to peak physical condition.

In a gesture of gratitude, Chipanama extended his sincere thanks to the Atletico Lusaka management, the technical staff, his family, his fellow teammates, and the club’s loyal supporters. He acknowledged the unwavering support they have consistently provided throughout his injury ordeal, highlighting the crucial role they have played in his recovery journey.



# FERNANDEZ PRAISES KAFUE CELTIC’S YOUTH DEVELOPMENT DURING VISIT TO CROCS SWAMP GROUND

By Joseph Tembo



French football consultant Nicolas Fernandez has commended Kafue Celtic’s youth development strategy, describing it as a model for long-term success in Zambian football. Speaking during a visit to the Crocs Swamp Ground in Chambali, where the club is preparing for a crucial Match Day 34 fixture against Chambishi FC, Fernandez said the club’s emphasis on nurturing young talent is laying the foundation for a sustainable future.

Fernandez, who works alongside fellow consultant Freddy Cane, has been a regular visitor to Zambia and Kafue Celtic in particular, helping to shape the club’s footballing philosophy and coaching methodology.

“We come here very often to exchange with the coaches and provide input that helps build the development of the club,” said Fernandez. “Our focus is especially on the youngest categories, the Baby Crocs, the Little Crocs, the Junior Crocs, because we believe that future success depends on the hard work we invest in them now.”

The Frenchman emphasized that Kafue Celtic’s vision balances short-term competitiveness with a long-term developmental outlook, a dual approach he sees as critical for producing top-level players.

“Football is unique in that you must manage both the short term, winning games, and the long term, developing

talent,” he said. “We want to dominate games by controlling the ball, be competitive in every aspect, and most importantly, build confident, creative players.”

Kafue Celtic has gained recognition in Zambia for its consistent investment in youth talent, and Fernandez was quick to credit club president Likawan for establishing an environment conducive to growth.

“The president has steadily put in place what’s needed, from quality facilities to good coaches, to help reach our objectives,” Fernandez noted. “Our setup allows young players to earn meaningful playing time in the right competitions.” In addition to consulting on match tactics and technical development, Fernandez is actively involved in shaping the club’s coaching structure, working closely with local staff.

“It’s a collaborative process. We meet regularly with the coaches to share ideas and build the training programs together,” he said. “That’s how we’ll reach our goals, by learning from each other.”

Although his current visit coincides with a major match, Fernandez said his primary focus this time is on the younger squads, as part of preparations for the next season. “This week is about improving the level of coaching and development in our youngest teams,” he said.

“We’re also discussing the organization for next season so we can continue raising the bar.”

Kafue Celtic’s recent success at an international youth tournament in Dubai, where the club emerged victorious in both the Under-14 and Under-16 categories, was a highlight Fernandez pointed to with pride.

“We were thrilled by the results, but more importantly, by the way the boys played,” he said. “Winning is good, but what matters more is playing in a way that reflects our philosophy.”

Fernandez praised the young players for their maturity and character, but cautioned against complacency.

“They’re fantastic players and fantastic people, and that’s essential. But we must keep them humble,” he warned. “Winning at U14 or U16 doesn’t guarantee success at senior level. They still have crucial years ahead, and it’s the daily effort that counts.”

Kafue Celtic will host Chambishi FC this Sunday at 15:00 hours at Croxton Grounds in what promises to be a high-stakes encounter. But as the senior squad gears up for battle, it is clear that the heart of the club’s ambitions lies with the future stars already making their mark, under the watchful guidance of coaches, consultants, and a philosophy rooted in patience and purpose.

# SEASONED MARATHONER MABIKA ANCHORS ZAMBIA ATHLETICS' GLOBAL PUSH

By Kazembe Chibale



Zambia Athletics has bolstered its off-field engine room with the strategic appointment of accomplished Zimbabwean marathon runner Royal Mabika as its new Global Outreach and Relations Officer. Mabika steps into this pivotal role for a four-year stint, commencing on May 10th and running until April 12th, 2029.

Tasked with spearheading Zambia Athletics' international drive, Mabika is expected to leverage his extensive global network and cultivate robust partnerships to champion the growth of the sport both domestically and on the world stage. His proven international experience, sharp communication skills, expert knowledge of the athletics landscape, and unwavering passion for seeing Zambian athletics sprint forward make him a key acquisition for the national governing body.

In his new capacity, Mabika will serve as Zambia Athletics' official envoy, representing the nation at a plethora of international events, crucial meetings, and influential

forums. A core element of his mandate will be to forge a formidable and collaborative working relationship with global powerhouses World Athletics and the Confederation of African Athletics (CAA), alongside other significant international federations.

This strategic move signals Zambia Athletics' intent to up their game on the global stage, aiming to create pathways for Zambian athletes to compete at the highest levels and attract international support for the development of the sport within the country. Mabika's appointment is a clear indication that Zambia Athletics is leaving no stone unturned in its quest to reach new distances in the international arena. His experience as an athlete who has run the international circuit will provide invaluable insight as he navigates the complexities of global sports relations. The hope is that Mabika's arrival will be the catalyst for Zambia Athletics to break new ground and secure a podium finish in terms of international collaboration and sporting advancement.

WEEK 34

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# PIRATES PRODUCE FITTING RIVEIRO SEND-OFF WITH ARROWS WIN

SuperSport



Orlando Pirates thrashed Lamontville Golden Arrows 3-0 in a Betway Premiership match played at Orlando Stadium in Soweto on Tuesday night, giving coach Jose Riveiro the perfect send-off.

The win saw the Buccaneers remain second in the league standings - reducing runaway leaders Mamelodi Sundowns' lead to 12 points, but the latter need just one point to clinch the title.

Pirates, who have two games in hand, will play host to TS Galaxy on Saturday.

Abafana Bes'thende, on the other hand, remained 14th in the standings, just three points above the relegation playoff spot.

Arrows will be desperate for a victory when they take on Richards Bay away on Saturday in the KwaZulu-Natal derby.

The Buccaneers attacked the Abafana Bes'thende's defence with speed from wide areas and they broke the deadlock in the 16th minute after some great work by Relebohile Mofokeng, whose pass found Tshegofatso Mabasa to make it 1-0 to Pirates.

It was nearly 2-0 to Pirates in the 19th minute when flying full-back Bandile Shandu hit the upright with a deflected shot.

However, Arrows did threaten in the 23rd minute when Nduduzo Sibiya hit the woodwork with a sublime curling effort and Pirates were leading 1-0 at halftime after containing Arrows.

A second half that was dominated by the Buccaneers followed as Deon

Hotto made it 2-0 with a hard and low shot in the 61st minute, beating Mamelodi Sundowns loanee Ismail Watenga at the near post, with the problematic Mofokeng providing his second assist of the match.

Pirates' 3-0 victory over Arrows was sealed by Kabelo Dlamini, who beat Watenga with a top-class free-kick which curled into the far post in the 66th minute, much to the delight of the Bucs fans inside the iconic stadium in what was coach Riveiro's farewell match.

In departing Orlando Pirates earlier than planned, after Tuesday's Betway Premiership clash at home to Lamontville Golden Arrows, Jose Riveiro will not equal Ruud Krol as the longest serving coach at the club.

But the 47-year-old Spaniard will finish with more games in charge than his Dutch counterpart, who was at Pirates for three full seasons from 2008 to 2011.

Riveiro departs the club after the match against Arrows, leaving assistant Mandla Ncikazi to complete the season with four league matches to take charge of.

Riveiro had asked Pirates chairman Irvin Khoza to be allowed to leave early to join his new club, without revealing the identity.

It has been widely reported, but not verified officially that Riveiro is headed to Egyptian giants Al Ahly and will get to coach in next month's Club World Cup.

Pirates thanked him on Tuesday as they sent out a tweet of appreciation for his time at the club, which saw Bucs win five knockout trophies but finish only as a runner-up to

Mamelodi Sundowns in the league.

Riveiro's biggest achievement, however, was taking Pirates to the Champions League semifinal where they narrowly lost to Pyramids of Egypt,

Tuesday's clash at the Orlando Stadium against Arrows (live on SuperSport at 7:30pm) will be the 132nd of Riveiro's reign after arriving to replace the duo of Ncikazi and Fadlu Davids.

He won 79, drew 26 and lost 126 of his matches in charge, including last Saturday's Nedbank Cup final to archrivals Kaizer Chiefs.

This season alone, Pirates have played 47 matches already and will finish the season with a total of 52 because of their progress to the last four of the Champions League.

Krol spent three full seasons as Pirates coach, the first man to do so in the long history of the club, but his tally of games over the three seasons was 119.

He won 60 of them, drew 38 and lost 21.

The former Dutch World Cup captain took Pirates to the triple of the league, Nedbank Cup and MTN8 in his last season in 2011 but surprisingly did not have his contract renewed thereafter.

Mamelodi Sundowns will look to secure the Betway Premiership title for the eighth straight season when they face Chippa United, for the second time in a week, at the Buffalo City Municipality Stadium in East London on Wednesday.

# TALE OF TWO HEADERS - DRAMA AT THE STADIUM OF LIGHT

BBC



Having trailed 2-1 from the first leg, Coventry took the lead on the night through Ephron Mason-Clark with 14 minutes of normal time remaining.

The Sky Blues were on top and taking the game to their hosts as the minutes ticked down, with the fourth official's sign showing three minutes of time added on.

And with barely eight seconds left of those three minutes, Frank Lampard and every Coventry fan in the stadium thought they had done it.

Tatsuhiko Sakamoto's excellent swinging ball found Haji Wright in space in the box, with the striker looking certain to score.

But USA international Wright, who scored 12 Championship goals this season, mistimed his header and the ball bounced agonisingly wide.

"That was the one," ex-Sky Blues keeper Steve Ogrizovic said on BBC CWR.

Sunderland were much improved in extra time, but the fact it was Ballard's header from a similar position that settled the match after such a costly miss will make it all the more heartbreaking for Coventry.

Coventry had almost 60% of the ball on the night as Lampard's side had 20 shots to Sunderland's 16.

And Le Bris, who has now led Sunderland to a play-off final against Sheffield United in his first season at the club, conceded the visitors were

the better team in normal time.

"It's really fantastic because this scenario was absolutely incredible," Le Bris told Sky Sports.

"We were probably too nervous for the first part of the game.

"During extra time, we were good. We played our football and we just enjoy it now."

For Coventry, it's a painful end to a season which has been on an upward trajectory since Lampard replaced Mark Robins in November.

Former Chelsea and Everton boss Lampard took over with the club 17th in the Championship and led them to a fifth-place finish, winning 16 of his 29 league games in charge.

"If anyone watched the two games, we dominated at home, we made a mistake and they scored," Lampard told Sky Sports. "I think we dominated huge periods of this game [too]. We played, controlled and in the second half it was wave after wave.

"The players have given everything from where we've come from - 17th in the league in December and the players have been brilliant in the second half of the season.

"We're not bitter, and congratulations to Sunderland, but we were the better team over the two football matches and that's why they'll be so happy going to Wembley."

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