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“WE MUST QUALIFY FOR THE 2030 WORLD CUP, WITHOUT FAIL,” - FAZ PRESIDENT

President Keith Mweemba has set an ambitious and historic target for the Chipolopolo: qualification for the 2030 FIFA World Cup. Speaking during a motivational visit to the national ...

pg 3



pg 5



pg 2



pg 3

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“THE ERA OF CHIPANTE PANTE IS BEHIND US.” - NORA

By Joseph Tembo



The Copper Queens are undergoing a quiet revolution. Gone are the days of chaotic, reactionary football, or what local soccer fans call “chipante pante”, as the Zambia women’s national football team shifts toward a more deliberate, possession-driven style of play. And this tactical transformation is shaping everything from who makes the squad to where they play on the pitch.

Speaking ahead of the international friendlies against Botswana and South Africa, Häuptle was clear: the team is moving into a new phase, one that demands discipline, structure, and precision.

“We want to be a team that builds up

the game, creates overloads, and has smart distances between players,” Häuptle explained. “The era of chipante pante is behind us.”

This shift comes at a crucial time. With the Women’s Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) on the horizon, Zambia is pushing to evolve into a side that can not only match but dominate continental heavyweights. South Africa, the reigning WAFCON champions, will provide the perfect litmus test for this new style.

It’s a style rooted in controlling tempo, pressing with intention, and regaining possession efficiently. That’s meant not just tactical drills,

but also reshuffling positions and roles.

“Some players have been moved into new positions that better fit the style we want to play,” Häuptle noted. “It’s not just about talent anymore, it’s about fitting into a system.”

The impact on player selection has been immediate. While top stars like Barbara Banda, Grace Chanda, and Prisca Chilufya remain essential to the squad, younger or less-established players now find themselves in the mix, not just to fill numbers, but because they offer qualities needed in Häuptle’s evolving structure.

FROM A SHY TEENAGER TO A NATIONAL HERO: THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY OF CHAMANGA

By Lucky Chama



Veteran football administrator Simata Simata has shared a touching and powerful story that encapsulates the spirit of Zambian football and the incredible rise of one of its most beloved sons, James Chamanga.

In a heartfelt post, Simata recounted the humble beginnings of Chamanga’s journey to stardom, which began 25 years ago at Kabulonga Secondary School grounds. At the time, Simata was coaching Makumbi Stars, a team that would later evolve into UNZA Stars, Amakumbi Stars, and eventually Mtendere Stars.

“While training my team, a teacher passing by pointed to a tall, slim boy and called out to me, ‘Coach! That boy there knows how to play soccer,’” Simata recalled. “I turned to my left, and there stood James Chamanga, looking shy but hopeful. I asked if it was true, and he nodded quietly.”

Initially skeptical because Chamanga had merely been watching from the sidelines instead of training, Simata decided to give the boy a chance. He invited him to return the next day for a friendly match against Lusaka Dynamos, then coached by the legendary Fred Mwila.

“He turned up the following day, shy and without boots,” Simata wrote. “I told him we didn’t encourage wearing boots anyway, trainers were fine.”

Chamanga declared himself a midfielder, and Simata deployed him on the right side of a 4-4-2 formation. To guide him, Simata asked central midfielder Donwell Yobe to “big brother” him on the pitch. What followed was nothing short of extraordinary.

“He played the whole game. The two of them destroyed Lusaka Dynamos, whom we beat 3-0,” Simata remembered. “After the match, Uncle Fred asked me where I had

found him. I told him it was his first game with me, he had just strayed into my camp the day before. Uncle Fred simply said, ‘He is going to be a great player.’”

And indeed, he was right.

Chamanga would go on to have a celebrated football career spanning over two decades, playing in South Africa and China before returning home to play for Red Arrows. His journey reached its peak in 2012 when he was part of the historic Chipolopolo squad that won the Africa Cup of Nations in Gabon, etching his name into Zambian football folklore.

Last Saturday marked the end of an era, as Chamanga played his final game for Red Arrows, closing the curtain on a remarkable career that began with a chance encounter and a shy nod.

Chamanga’s story is more than just about football, it’s about belief, opportunity, and the quiet resilience of a young boy who dared to dream. And for Simata Simata, it’s a proud chapter in a life dedicated to nurturing raw talent into greatness. From the dusty grounds of Kabulonga to continental glory, James Chamanga’s legacy is one that will inspire generations to come.

MERCY CHIPASULA CROWNED JUNIOR FEMALE SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR AT 2025 RASA AWARDS

By Joseph Tembo



Zambian footballer Mercy Chipasula has been named the Junior Female Sportsperson of the Year at the prestigious 2025 Regional Annual Sports Awards (RASA) held on May 24 at the Harare International Conference Centre (HICC).

The annual awards, hosted by the African Union Sports Council (AUSC) Region 5, celebrate sporting excellence across ten southern African nations — Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Chipasula’s recognition marks a proud moment for Zambia, with the young star being hailed as one of the country’s brightest sporting prospects. Her consistent performance, skill, and dedication to the game have set her apart in a highly competitive field of young athletes from across the region.

Zambia’s Minister of Youth, Sport and Arts, Hon. Elvis Nkandu, MP, was present at the ceremony to

personally congratulate Chipasula. He praised her achievement as a testament to the growth of women’s football in Zambia and a reflection of the country’s investment in youth development through sport.

“Mercy’s win is a proud moment for our nation,” Hon. Nkandu said. “She represents the next generation of Zambian talent, and we are committed to ensuring that athletes like her continue to rise and shine on regional and global stages.”

Since its inception in 2016, RASA has become the region’s premier platform for recognizing and rewarding the outstanding contributions of athletes, coaches, administrators, volunteers, and sports journalists across AUSC Region 5.

Mercy Chipasula now joins a distinguished list of Zambian athletes who have made their mark at the awards, and her win is expected to inspire many more young girls across the country to pursue excellence in sport.



“WE MUST QUALIFY FOR THE 2030 WORLD CUP, WITHOUT FAIL,” - FAZ PRESIDENT

By Joseph Tembo



Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) President Keith Mweemba has set an ambitious and historic target for the Chipolopolo: qualification for the 2030 FIFA World Cup. Speaking during a motivational visit to the national team at Nkoloma Stadium this morning, Mweemba declared that Zambia must qualify for the global showpiece “without fail.”

“This is non-negotiable,” Mweemba told the players during their training session. “2030, we must qualify for the World Cup for the first time, without fail.”

While rallying the squad ahead of the 2025 HOLLYWOODBETS COSAFA Cup in South Africa, Mweemba made it clear that every tournament from now on, including COSAFA and the upcoming African Nations Championship (CHAN), is a

stepping stone towards that ultimate goal.

“We don’t want to put pressure on you only in the final days,” he said. “We are preparing early. COSAFA and CHAN are part of the roadmap to a bigger dream. We want to do what we did in 2012, win the Africa Cup. But beyond that, we are now looking to break new ground by reaching the World Cup.”

The FAZ president acknowledged the challenges Zambia faces in the current World Cup qualifying campaign, calling it a “tricky situation,” but urged the team to finish strongly and build momentum for future campaigns.

“This is not about wishful thinking,” he added. “It’s about proper preparation, budgeting on time, knowing what each player, coach,

and official is entitled to. We must remove distractions like delayed allowances and focus on creating an environment where players are motivated and supported.”

Mweemba emphasized unity and discipline in the squad, encouraging players to work as one, regardless of their club backgrounds.

“You are one family here. Once there is love and unity, and you support and fight for each other, nothing is impossible,” he said.

With a young squad and several key tournaments on the horizon, Mweemba’s message was clear: Zambia’s football renaissance starts now, and the road to 2030 begins with belief, preparation, and commitment.

UNSEEN AND UNDERAPPRECIATED: WHO ARE ZAMBIA’S MODERN-DAY WEBBY CHIKABALAS?

By Lucky Chama



In a heartfelt tribute, former Chipolopolo midfielder Charles Musonda stirred the Zambian football community with emotional memories of the late Webster “Webby” Chikabala, a forward he described as “an intelligent striker with quick feet, superb turns, and a rare ability to retain possession.” Reflecting on his former teammate’s talent, Musonda posed a challenge to fans: Can we name a nimble striker today, not necessarily from the first division, who matches that level of brilliance?

It’s a compelling question that goes beyond nostalgia. It’s a prompt to look closely at the grassroots and hidden corners of Zambian football where diamonds in the rough often go unnoticed.

The Forgotten Flair of Webby Chikabala

Webby Chikabala, who played for Marítimo in Portugal and represented Zambia at the 1990 and 1992 African Cup of Nations, was not just a footballer, he was an artist on the pitch. He possessed flair, creativity, and technical mastery that made him nearly impossible to mark. Musonda recalled that Chikabala “rarely lost the ball” and could have thrived in top European leagues, especially Spain, where “crafty players” are revered.

But in Zambia, stories like Webby’s are not uncommon, extraordinary talents who bloom brightly but briefly, often without the spotlight they deserve.

Why These Talents Stay Hidden

The road to recognition is not equal. While the FAZ and clubs are making efforts to scout nationally, the current system still heavily favors those in top-tier academies or urban centers. Players like Chikabala, who broke through despite the odds, are now rare in a more structured but less inclusive football environment.

Charles Musonda’s point is not only about comparison; it’s a call to remember the context. “When comparing players we miss the main point, the level and competition a certain player endured,” he said. The players of Chikabala’s era faced tougher physical play, less media attention, and few development resources, yet their class shone through.

The Way Forward

Musonda’s tribute invites a deeper reflection: How many Webbys are we missing today because we aren’t looking in the right places? What mechanisms exist to discover and nurture flair outside of the mainstream?

Scouting in Zambia must evolve, to not only track stats but also feel the game: the vision, the quick feet, the intelligence that defined players like Webby Chikabala. Perhaps it’s time for clubs, scouts, and fans alike to turn their eyes to the shadows, where the next great Zambian forward may already be weaving magic with no cameras watching.

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An advertisement for Mojabet's Aviatrix game. It features two women in the foreground wearing pilot goggles and headsets. In the background, there's a rocket ship and several gold coins with the Mojabet logo.

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An advertisement for Mojabet's Chimwela game. It features a large bomb in the center with a lit fuse, surrounded by several gold coins with the Mojabet logo. The background is dark with some clouds.



KINGS KANGWA ENDS STELLAR SEASON WITH GOAL IN HAPOEL BE'ER SHEVA ROUT

By Joseph Tembo



Zambia’s midfield maestro Klings Kangwa capped off a career-best season in style, scoring in Hapoel Be’er Sheva’s emphatic 5-0 win over Hapoel Haifa in their final match of the Israeli Premier League campaign on Saturday.

Despite the dominant performance, Hapoel finished second on the table, two points behind champions Maccabi Tel Aviv, who matched their result with a 5-0 win over Beitar Jerusalem to retain the title. The outcome dashed Hapoel’s hopes of snatching the championship on the final day.

Still, the season will go down as a remarkable one for Kangwa, who

has emerged as one of the Israeli league’s standout players. The 26-year-old Chipolopolo midfielder, who joined from Red Star Belgrade, finished the league campaign with 14 goals and 9 assists in 35 appearances, the second-highest scoring midfielder in the league and among the overall top five scorers.

Kangwa’s all-round brilliance has earned him three major award nominations in Israel:

- 🏆 Premier League Player of the Season
- 🌍 Foreign Player of the Season
- ★ League Best XI

His total tally across all

competitions stands at 15 goals and 9 assists in 41 matches, highlighting just how crucial he has been to Hapoel’s push for silverware this season.

While the league title has slipped through their fingers, Kangwa and his Hapoel teammates still have a shot at glory as they prepare for the State Cup final against Beitar Jerusalem, the very side that dented their title hopes earlier this month with a 1-1 draw.

As Zambians reflect on one of their own making waves in Europe, Klings Kangwa’s 2024/25 season serves as a beacon of what determination, consistency, and talent can achieve.

KUNDANANJI SHINES IN NWSL THRILLER AS BAY FC DRAW WITH HOUSTON DASH

By Joseph Tembo



Zambian forward Racheal Kundananji put in another influential performance in the National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL) as her side, Bay FC, battled to a dramatic 2-2 draw away to Houston Dash in a Saturday night clash full of action.

While the match will be remembered for late drama and end-to-end football, Zambians had their eyes firmly on Kundananji, whose blistering pace and vision helped set up Bay FC’s second goal and kept the Houston defence on high alert throughout.

Bay FC, trailing 1-0 at halftime, turned things around quickly in the second half. Penelope Hocking equalized in the 53rd minute, before

KundanANJI torched her marker just three minutes later, dragging the keeper wide and laying off the ball for Rachel Hill to calmly slot home her first of the season.

The combination of Kundananji’s explosiveness and playmaking has become a growing weapon for Bay FC, and this game only reaffirmed her value to the squad.

But just as Bay looked set to snatch all three points, Houston found a late equalizer through substitute Messiah Bright in the 88th minute. Despite a nervy end, including two close chances for the Dash, Bay FC held on thanks to key saves from goalkeeper Jordan Silkowitz.

“It was a good point away from

home,” said Bay FC coach Albertin Montoya. “We showed great character, especially coming from behind. Kundananji gave us another strong shift, she was key in creating that second goal.”

While Kundananji didn’t get on the scoresheet, her impact was undeniable, stretching defenders, creating chances, and playing unselfishly for the team.

Bay FC now heads into the international break, with Kundananji expected to return to national duty with the Copper Queens, who are preparing for friendlies against Botswana and South Africa. Bay FC resumes league play on June 7 when they host Portland Thorns FC in San Jose.

FROM GRASSROOTS TO GREATNESS: ZA LAUNCHES CLUB FUNDING AND TALENT DISCOVERY DRIVE

By Joseph Tembo



For the first time in 27 years, Zambian athletics clubs will receive official financial support, a move set to reawaken the sport from the grassroots level up.

Zambia Athletics President Major Francis Bernard Bwalya confirmed that the national federation is rolling out a robust development strategy aimed at unearthing new talent and reviving community-level sports structures. This includes the historic reintroduction of club funding, alongside a countrywide talent identification program.

“This is how champions are built, not from the top, but from the ground up,” said Major Bwalya in a media briefing. “We want to fund the pipeline, from the first pair of spikes to the Olympic starting block.”

Zambia Athletics will allocate K300,000 to provincial athletics bodies, with a strong focus on channeling those funds into community clubs. Clubs, which have long operated without resources, will now have the opportunity to invest in proper training equipment, uniforms, and travel for young athletes.

“Some clubs have survived on nothing but passion,” said a provincial coach from Central Province. “Now, they have a fighting chance to actually develop athletes who can go all the way.”

Alongside club funding, the federation is launching a national talent identification program that

will partner with schools and rural communities. The goal: to find raw, untapped talent in every corner of Zambia, from dusty village fields to inner-city courts.

These athletes will be scouted, trained, and tracked through a new athlete development database, ensuring promising individuals get the support they need as they progress through the ranks.

Zambia Athletics says the long-term vision is to establish a seamless athlete development pathway: from early-stage identification in schools and community clubs, through to provincial competitions, and eventually to elite national and international events. This system aims to correct years of stagnation and lost potential due to underfunded structures and lack of coordination.

“We believe Zambia has world-class talent,” said Major Bwalya. “But without grassroots investment, we’ll never unlock it.”

The strategy is part of Zambia Athletics’ broader Vision 2030 plan, which outlines goals for international competitiveness, infrastructure development, and sports science integration.

If successful, this grassroots revival could usher in a golden generation for Zambian track and field, built not on luck or individual sacrifice, but on a system designed to deliver greatness from the ground up.



Crystal Palace gave Liverpool their final guard of honour of the season. Liverpool then lined up themselves to give the FA Cup champions their own guard of honour. Respect at the highest of levels. - ESPN



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