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# GRANT UNVEILS 25-MEMBER PROVISIONAL SQUAD FOR JUNE FRIENDLIES

Rising star David Hamansenya has earned his maiden call-up to the senior Zambia national team following a standout performance at the 2023 U-20 Africa Cup of Nations ...

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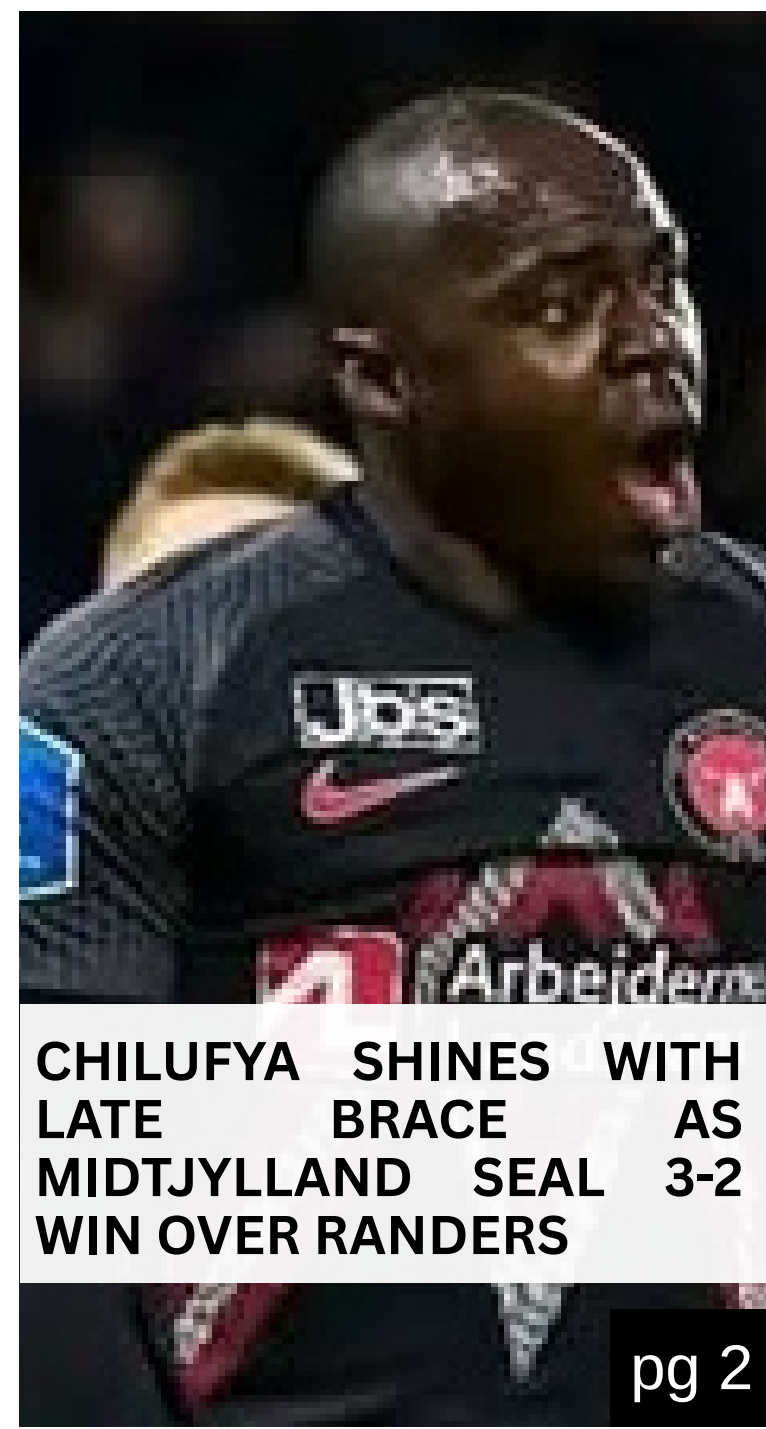
ZAMBIA U17 ASSISTANT COACH AARON KAWANGU REACTS TO FIFA U17 WORLD CUP DRAW

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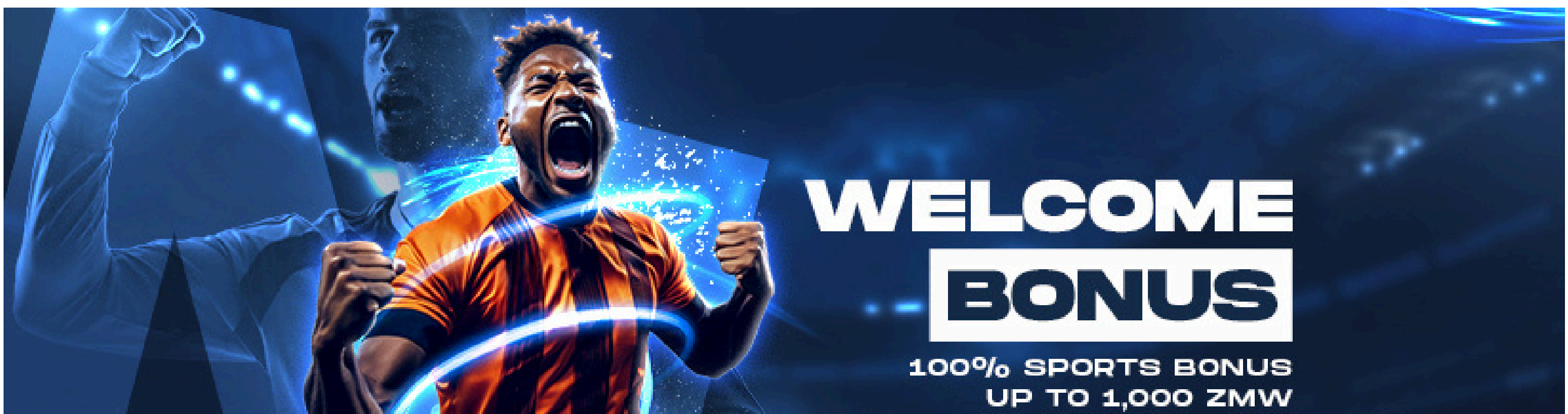
COPPER QUEENS NEAR FULL STRENGTH AS KUNDANANJI JOINS CAMP AHEAD OF BOTSWANA AND SOUTH AFRICA FRIENDLIES

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CHILUFYA SHINES WITH LATE BRACE AS MIDTJYLLAND SEAL 3-2 WIN OVER RANDERS

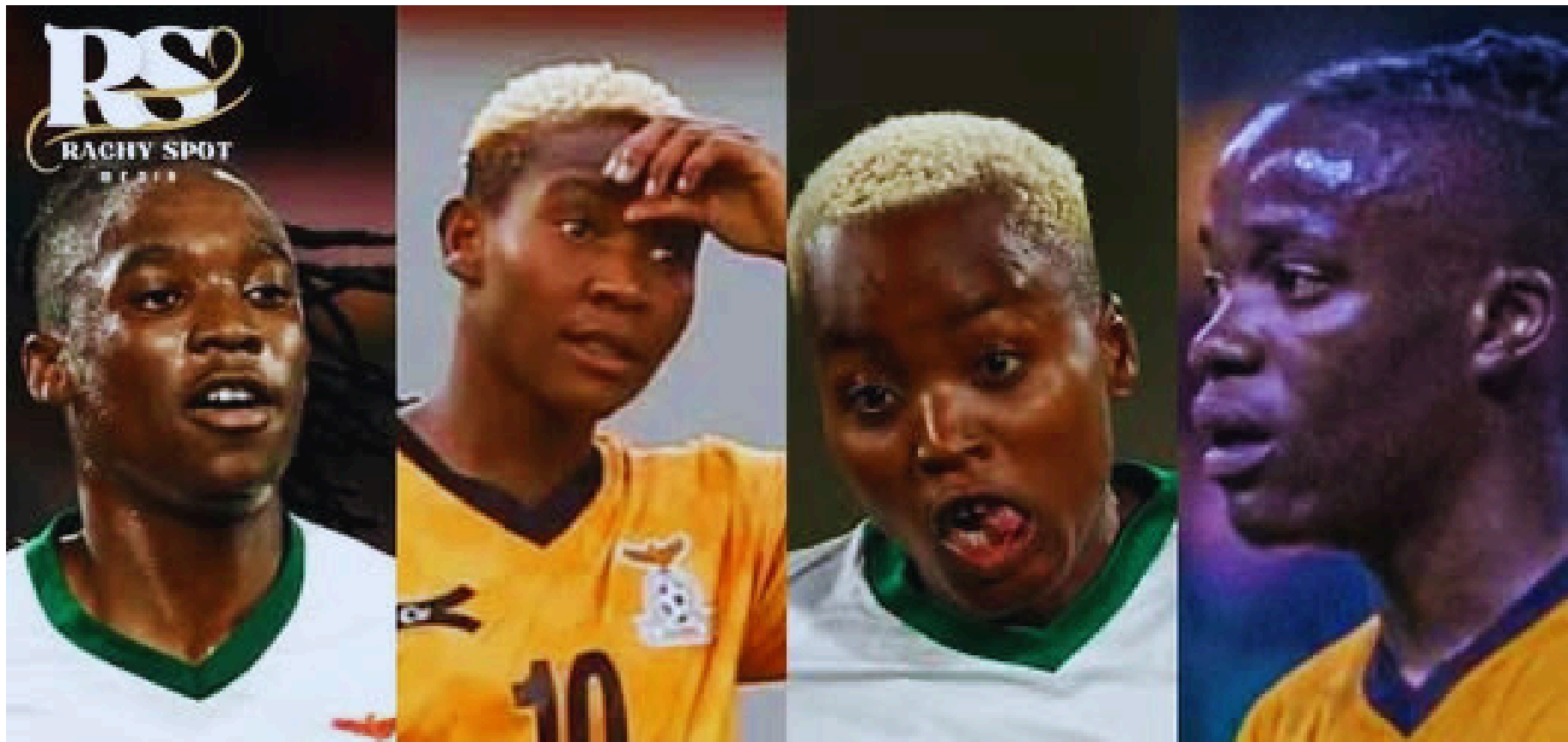
pg 2





# COPPER QUEENS NEAR FULL STRENGTH AS KUNDANANJI JOINS CAMP AHEAD OF BOTSWANA AND SOUTH AFRICA FRIENDLIES

By Joseph Tembo



The Zambia Women’s National Team, popularly known as the Copper Queens, is nearly at full strength ahead of their international friendlies against Botswana and South Africa, following the arrival of star striker Racheal Kundananji on Monday afternoon.

Kundananji, who plays for Bay FC in the National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL), landed at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport at 14:35, becoming the 23rd player to report to camp. Her arrival followed the earlier return of fellow USA-based players Barbra Banda, Grace Chanda, and Prisca Chilufya, all of whom play for Orlando Pride.

Coach Nora Häuptle now awaits only one player, Racheal Nachula of Israeli club Hapoel Jerusalem, to complete her 24-member squad, as final preparations ramp up for the two upcoming friendlies. Zambia will take on Botswana on 31 May and South Africa’s Banyana Banyana on 3 June in Pretoria. Both matches fall within the FIFA international window and are part of the team’s build-up to the 2025 TotalEnergies Women’s Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON), which will be held in Morocco from 5 to 26 July.

The Copper Queens’ camp features a strong blend of local and international talent. China-based midfielder Ireen Lungu recently joined camp along with compatriots Xiomara Mapepa, Fridah Mukoma, and Kabange Mupopo. Turkey-based defenders Martha Tembo and Lushomo Mweemba also reported earlier, while locally-based players from Green Buffaloes, Red Arrows, ZESCO Ndola Girls, and other top Zambian clubs round out the squad.

Coach Häuptle will be using the Botswana and South Africa encounters to fine-tune tactics, build team chemistry, and evaluate player readiness ahead of the continental showdown in Morocco.

Final 24-Member Copper Queens Squad:

#### Goalkeepers:

Mwila Chishala Mufunte (Green Buffaloes), Catherine Musonda (Red Arrows), Eunice Sakala (Indeni Roses)

#### Defenders:

Martha Tembo, Lushomo Mweemba (Hakkarigucu Spor, Turkey),

Margaret Belemu (Red Arrows), Margaret Gondwe (Green Buffaloes), Judith Soko (ZESCO Ndola Girls), Pauline Zulu (ZANACO Ladies)

#### Midfielders:

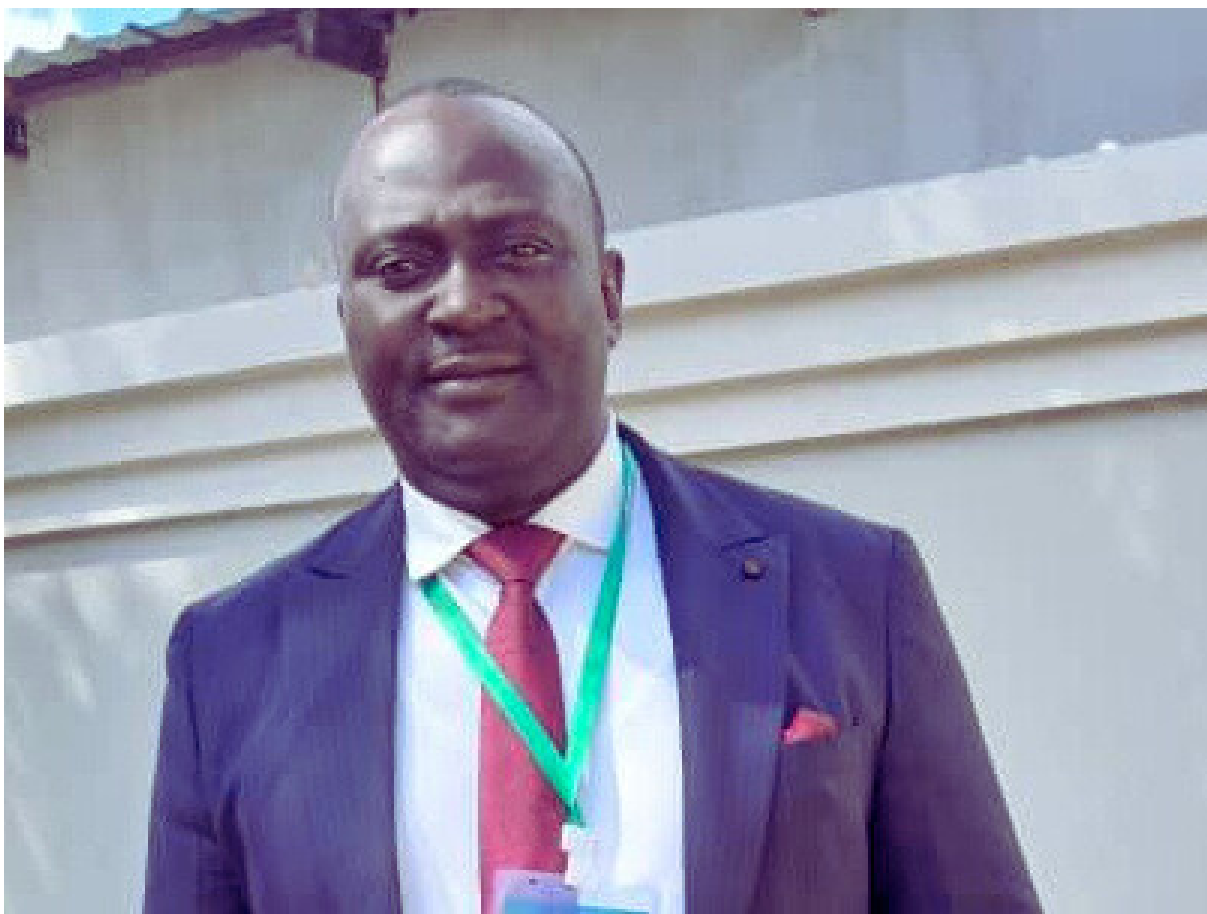
Ireen Lungu (Sichuan, China), Xiomara Mapepa (Beijing Jingstan FC, China), Racheal Nachula (Hapoel Jerusalem, Israel), Grace Chanda, Prisca Chilufya (Orlando Pride, USA), Evarine Susan Katongo, Natasha Nanyangwe (Green Buffaloes), Rhoda Chileshe (Indeni Roses), Mercy Chipasula (Kamfinsa Blue Eagles Queens), Mapalo Maluba (Nchanga Rangers Queens), Mary Wilombe (Red Arrows)

#### Strikers:

Barbra Banda (Orlando Pride, USA), Fridah Mukoma (Beijing Jingstan FC, China), Kabange Mupopo (Henan WFC, China), Racheal Kundananji (Bay FC, USA) With just weeks remaining before WAFCON 2025, the Copper Queens will be looking to maximize every opportunity to sharpen their edge and establish themselves as serious contenders for continental glory.

# FAZ SENDS GET WELL WISHES TO MWANDI QUEENS FOLLOWING A ROAD ACCIDENT

By Lucky Chama



The Football Association of Zambia Northern Province Executive Committee, led by Chairman Chikonde Mbalazi, expresses heartfelt sympathy and solidarity to Mwandi Queens following the unfortunate road accident involving the team.

“We are deeply saddened to learn of the accident involving Mwandi Queens. Our thoughts and prayers are with the players, coaches, officials and supporters during this difficult time” Mbalazi said.

According to reports, several members of the team sustained serious injuries when the team vehicle was involved in an accident en route to Mongu for play offs which was scheduled for today but no death has been recorded.

The FAZ Northern Province has pledged to stay in contact with the club management and will provide any necessary support during this difficult period. To Mwandi Queens, be strong. You are not alone and you will come back stronger

# CHILUFYA SHINES WITH LATE BRACE AS MIDTJYLLAND SEAL 3-2 WIN OVER RANDERS

By Joseph Tembo



Zambian winger Edward Chilufya delivered a sensational performance off the bench to help FC Midtjylland secure a thrilling 3-2 victory over Randers FC in their final Danish Superliga match of the season.

Coming on in the 75th minute, Chilufya made an immediate impact, scoring twice in the 85th and 90th minutes to overturn the scoreline and seal the win for his side. The Chipolopolo star’s explosive contribution earned him the Man of the Match accolade, capping off a remarkable individual display.

The win saw Midtjylland finish second in the Superliga with 62

points, narrowly missing out on the title by a single point to champions FC København. As a result, the club will participate in the UEFA Europa Conference League qualifiers next season.

Chilufya, who now boasts six goals and six assists in just nine starts for the Danish side across all competitions, continues to prove his value both at club and international level. He has also been named in Avram Grant’s 25-man provisional Zambia squad for two upcoming friendlies in Morocco on June 6 and 10, part of the team’s preparations for September’s FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

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# 24-MEMBER COPPER QUEENS

SQUAD FOR FIFA INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLIES

31 MAY VS BOTSWANA | 3 JUNE VS SOUTH AFRICA

## GOALKEEPERS

MWILA CHISHALA MUFUNTE

CATHERINE MUSONDA

EUNICE SAKALA

## DEFENDERS

MARTHA TEMBO

LUSHOMO MWEEMBA

MARGARET BELEMU

MARGARET GONDWE

JUDITH SOKO

PAULINE ZULU

## MIDFIELDERS

IREEN LUNGU

XIOMARA MAPEPA

RACHEAL NACHULA

GRACE CHANDA

PRISCA CHILUFYA

EVARINE SUSAN KATONGO

NATASHA NANYANGWE

RHODA CHILESHE

MERCY CHIPASULA

MAPALO MALUBA

MARY WILOMBE

## FORWARDS

BARBRA BANDA

FRIDAH MUKOMA

KABANGE MUPOPO

RACHEAL KUNDANANJI





# JOSHUA MUTALE SHINES DESPITE SIMBA SC DEFEAT IN CAF CONFEDERATION CUP FINAL

By Joseph Tembo



Zambian midfielder Joshua Mutale delivered a standout performance on the continental stage, scoring Simba SC's only goal in the second leg of the 2024/2025 CAF Confederation Cup final against Moroccan giants RS Berkane. Despite Simba's 1-1 draw in the return fixture, it wasn't enough to overturn the 2-0 deficit from the first leg, with RS Berkane clinching the title 3-1 on aggregate.

Mutale's goal, a sharp finish from a tight angle after a clever assist by Elie Mpanzu, briefly revived Simba's hopes of a comeback. However, those hopes were dashed when

substitute Soumaila Sidibe leveled the match for Berkane, securing their second-leg draw and confirming their status as champions.

For his heroic efforts and commanding presence in midfield, Joshua Mutale was named the TotalEnergies Man of the Match. It's the latest accolade for the former Power Dynamos star, who was also recently named Man of the Match in Simba's 2-1 league win over KMC in Tanzania.

Mutale's red-hot form has also

earned him his spot in Avram Grant's 25-man provisional squad for Zambia's upcoming international friendlies in Morocco on June 6 and 10. These games are part of the Chipolopolo's preparation for the crucial FIFA World Cup qualifiers set to resume in September.

Though Simba fell short in their continental quest, Zambia can take pride in the rising star of Joshua Budo Mutale, who continues to represent the nation with distinction at club and international level.

# ZAMBIA U17 ASSISTANT COACH AARON KAWANGU REACTS TO FIFA U17 WORLD CUP DRAW

By Joseph Tembo



Zambia U17 assistant coach Aaron Kawangu has expressed optimism following the official draw for the FIFA U17 World Cup, which took place in Doha. Zambia has been placed in Group H alongside football giants Brazil, as well as Indonesia and Honduras.

Speaking shortly after the draw, Kawangu described the occasion as exciting and historic, with this year's edition being especially significant as it features 48 teams.

"We just witnessed the final draws for the World Cup Under-17 here in Doha. It's pretty exciting, especially

because this event is going to be special, with 48 teams taking part, and Zambia is one of them," he said.

Despite being grouped with traditionally strong teams, Kawangu emphasized that modern football no longer has underdogs. He highlighted the global improvement in the game and insisted that success will depend largely on preparation.

"In today's football, there are no underdogs. We've seen how football is improving on the global stage. The most important thing is how well you prepare. If the preparation is adequate, the chances are very high—

not just to participate, but to compete," Kawangu explained.

He also expressed respect for the group opponents but maintained confidence in the team's potential. "We've got massive respect for every team in our group, but we believe if we prepare adequately, we've got a chance to pull through," he concluded.

Zambia will be hoping to make a strong impression on the world stage as they prepare for a challenging yet promising journey in Group H.

# INAKI WILLIAMS VOTED BEST AFRICAN PLAYER IN LALIGA EA SPORTS

SuperSport



Williams is the first back-to-back winner in the history of the award and came on top with 32 per cent of the vote conducted among expert journalists and fans across the continent.

Athletic Club forward and Ghanaian international Iñaki Williams has been crowned the 2024/25 Sporty LaLiga MVP, an award recognising the best African player in LaLiga EA Sports this season.

Williams' standout season makes him a deserving winner of the award. Athletic Club enjoyed a historic 2024/25 LaLiga campaign, securing their first Champions League spot in a decade. The 30-year-old played more minutes than any other player in the squad and contributed 14 goals and assists combined, proving vital to the team's success.

Williams' win was announced on Africa Day at a media event in Johannesburg, South Africa, featuring former Cameroon international and Barcelona midfielder Alex Song, Soccer Africa presenter Thomas Mlambo, and a panel of local football experts, bringing the Sporty LaLiga MVP to African soil for the first time ever.

"We currently have an excellent mix of young talent and experienced players at Athletic Club, and we're playing some incredible football," said Williams.

"We've had two great seasons, and we're not setting any limits for ourselves."

The results, which combined the votes of an expert jury of 25 football journalists from across Africa and thousands of fans living in Sub Saharan countries who cast their vote via the online MiLiga Fan Zone, saw Bilbao-born Williams come out on top with 32 per cent of the vote.

Miguel Puche, Brand Director of Sporty Group, said: "Everyone at Sporty congratulates Iñaki on his back-to-back MVP win. From established stars like him to rising talents such as Yan Diomandé, the influence of African football is growing stronger each season.

He was followed by Villarreal CF and Senegal midfielder Pape Gueye (12 per cent) in second place, and CA Osasuna and Cameroon defender Flavien Enzo Boyomo (10 per cent) in third place.

At Sporty, we're deeply committed to celebrating that journey, giving it the visibility it deserves and bringing LaLiga closer to fans across the continent."

After receiving the award, Williams said: "LaLiga has always had African players or players with African heritage, and it's a real honour to be able to represent our roots in this way, to make us seen in a league that's so special and has always had such a huge following.

"It's a beautiful thing for young people across Africa, a continent where football has always been a big part of life, to be able to see their role models succeed."

He added: "An award like this always means you're doing things right. I'm so happy and proud that I've won it two years in a row... hopefully, I can make it three!"

Tresor Penku, Managing Director of LaLiga Africa, said: "We congratulate Iñaki on retaining the Sporty LaLiga MVP award and commend him on yet another standout season in his illustrious career. We also extend our thanks to the journalists and the thousands of fans across Africa who voted.

This remarkable support and engagement reflects the powerful presence and growing influence of African talent in LaLiga EA Sports."

Williams is the first repeat winner in Sporty LaLiga MVP history, having won the 2024 edition, following in the footsteps of Nigeria's Samuel Chukwueze (2023) and Morocco's Yassine Bounou (2022).



# GRANT UNVEILS 25-MEMBER PROVISIONAL SQUAD FOR JUNE FRIENDLIES AS TEEN SENSATION DAVID HAMANSENYA EARNS SENIOR CHIPOLOPOLO CALL-UP

By Joseph Tembo



Rising star David Hamanseny has earned his maiden call-up to the senior Zambia national team following a standout performance at the 2023 U-20 Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt, a move that comes as little surprise to those following the 17-year-old’s meteoric rise.

Currently on the books of Spanish side Leganés U19, Hamanseny was one of the breakout stars of the U20 AFCON, where he wore jersey number 12 and played every minute of Zambia’s four matches. Despite being the youngest player in the squad, he showcased maturity, discipline, and defensive intelligence far beyond his years. He not only emerged as Zambia’s highest-rated defender but also made a critical offensive contribution, registering the team’s only assist of the tournament, setting up Boniface Phiri’s equaliser in the must-win 1–1 draw against South Africa.

The left full-back’s call-up to the Chipolopolo comes ahead of Zambia’s international friendlies against Sudan and Tunisia scheduled during the June FIFA international window. Coach Avram Grant has named a 25-man provisional squad

for the two games, which will be played in Morocco on June 6 and 10 respectively. The matches are part of Zambia’s preparation for the September round of FIFA World Cup qualifiers, where they will host Morocco before facing Tanzania and Niger in October.

Hamanseny joins a defensive lineup that includes experienced campaigners like Kabaso Chongo, Dominic Chanda, and Benedict Chepeshi. The technical bench is expected to trim the provisional list before the squad departs for Morocco, but Hamanseny’s inclusion is a clear nod to his potential and the bright future ahead.

## PROVISIONAL SQUAD HIGHLIGHTS:

**Goalkeepers:** Toaster Nsabata (Zesco), Francis Mwansa (Green Buffaloes), Willard Mwanza (Power Dynamos)

**Defenders:** Gift Mphande (Rishon LeZion-Israel), Dominic Chanda (Power Dynamos), Kabaso Chongo, Killian Kanguluma (both Kabwe Warriors), Obino Chisala (Al

Merreikh-Sudan), David Hamanseny (Leganés-Spain), Benedict Chepeshi (Zesco United)

**Midfielders:** Benson Sakala (Boleslav Mlada-Czech Republic), Miguel Chaiwa (BSC Young Boys-Switzerland), Kings Kangwa (Hapoel Beer’Sheva-Israel), Golden Mafwenta (MFK Vyskov-Czech Republic), Emmanuel Banda (Al Tai-Saudi Arabia), Joshua Mutale (Simba Sc-Tanzania), Kelvin Kapumbu (Zanaco), Owen Tembo (Power Dynamos)

**Forwards:** Patson Daka (Leicester City-England), Edward Chilufya (Midtjylland-Denmark), Clatous Chama , Kennedy Musonda (both Young Africans-Tanzania), Lubambo Musonda (Magdeburg-Germany), Kelvin Kampamba (Al Medina-Libya), Joseph Sabobo Banda (FC Zurich-Switzerland).

With Zambia’s eyes firmly on World Cup qualification and a strong showing at the upcoming AFCON, the emergence of young talents like David Hamanseny offers a promising glimpse into the future of Chipolopolo football.

# ALONSO: 'WE CAN DO BIG THINGS WORTHY OF REAL MADRID'

SuperSport



New Real Madrid coach Xabi Alonso said on Monday he has the energy and excitement to deliver success worthy of the Spanish giants as he was presented as Carlo Ancelotti's replacement

Alonso will lead the team at the Club World Cup this summer and has signed a three-year deal until June 2028, after Ancelotti departed to take charge of the Brazil national team.

Madrid failed to win a major trophy this season, losing their LaLiga crown to rivals Barcelona, who also beat them in the Copa del Rey and Spanish Super Cup finals.

Real were dealt a heavy Champions League quarterfinal defeat by Arsenal as their European trophy defence also fell short.

"We have fantastic players, we have a team that has a lot of potential, (capable of) a very good present and a very good future," Alonso said at Real Madrid's training ground.

"That gives me a lot of reason to come here with a lot of energy and a lot of hope that I can get the best out of all the players and build a great team...

"(I have) the conviction that we can achieve big things, worthy of Real Madrid, worthy of all these European Cups, of all these accomplishments made over so many years."

Alonso, a technically gifted central midfielder in his playing days, made 236 Madrid appearances between 2009-2014, winning six trophies including the Champions League in his final season at the club.

That was Madrid's 10th European Cup - La Decima - and they have gone on to win five more in the past decade for a record 15 Champions League triumphs.

The 43-year-old coach led Bayer Leverkusen to a superb unbeaten Bundesliga and German Cup double in the 2023-24 campaign, making him a target for Europe's top clubs.

Alonso, who was coached by Ancelotti, Pep Guardiola and Jose Mourinho among other managerial greats, said it was a "special day".

"It's a day I will have marked in my calendar for life," continued Alonso. "I have been away from here for a few years, but I think the link with Madrid and the fans has never ended, it's always been there.

"And today, when I walked into Valdebebas (the club's training ground) an hour and a half ago, it was reborn... I have the feeling that it's the start of an era, as the president said."

Madrid chief Florentino Perez gave an introductory speech welcoming Alonso back to the Spanish capital. "This is a very special day for those who love Real Madrid, it will be the start of a new era filled with excitement and intense emotions," said Madrid president Perez.

"A coach arrives who is one of the best in the world, and who knows what this badge and this shirt means...

"Today we welcome one of our own – Xabi Alonso. Welcome back to your home, Real Madrid."

Former Liverpool and Bayern Munich midfielder Alonso also won the 2010 World Cup and two European Championships with Spain before starting his coaching career.

Real Madrid's Club World Cup campaign starts against Saudi Arabian side Al-Hilal in Miami on June 18, which will be the first look at Alonso's project.







## 25 MEMBER CHIPOLOPOLO

### FIFA WINDOW FRIENDLY MATCHES PROVISIONAL SQUAD AGAINST SUDAN & TUNISIA

#### GOALKEEPERS

TOASTER NSABATA  
FRANCIS MWANSA  
WILLARD MWANZA

(Zesco United)  
(Green Buffaloes)  
(Power Dynamos)

#### DEFENDERS

GIFT MPHANDE  
DOMINIC CHANDA  
KABASO CHONGO  
KILLIAN KANGULUMA  
OBINO CHISALA  
DAVID HAMANSENYA  
BENEDICT CHEPESHI

(Rishon LeZion-Israel)  
(Power Dynamos)  
(Kabwe Warriors)  
(Kabwe Warriors)  
(Al Merreikh-Sudan)  
(Leganes-Spain)  
(Zesco United)

#### MIDFIELDERS

BENSON SAKALA  
LUBAMBO MUSONDA  
MIGUEL CHAIWA  
KINGS KANGWA  
GOLDEN MAFWENTA  
EMMANUEL BANDA  
JOSHUA MUTALE  
JOSEPH S. BANDA  
CLATOUS CHAMA  
KELVIN KAMPAMBA  
KELVIN KAPUMBU  
OWEN TEMBO

(Boleslav Mlada-Czech Republic)  
(Magdeburg-Germany)  
(BSC Young Boys-Switzerland)  
(Hapoel Beer'Sheva-Israel)  
(MFK Vyskov-Czech Republic)  
(Al Tai-Saudi Arabia)  
(Simba Sc-Tanzania)  
(FC Zurich-Switzerland)  
(Young Africans-Tanzania)  
(Al Medina-Libya)  
(Zanaco)  
(Power Dynamos)

#### FORWARDS

PATSON DAKA  
EDWARD CHILUFYA  
KENNEDY MUSONDA

(Leicester City-England)  
(Midtjylland-Denmark)  
(Young Africans-Tanzania)

