

# Omari Forson, new kid on the block

Sports Desk Report

**M**ANCHESTER United manager Erik Ten Hag has unleashed another Ghanaian prodigy in the English Premier League and got Ghanaians excited at the prospect of the youngster being tracked by the Ghana Football Association (GFA) to play for Ghana in the future.

Last Saturday Omari Forson will make his first start for United against Fulham at Old Trafford,

With another Ghanaian youngster, Kobbie Mainoo, gradually establishing himself in the United starting line-up, Ghanaians will be hopeful of seeing the

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## Black Queens target Zambia upset

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• Grace Asantewaa  
— Black Queens

## Ghana's Olympic hopefuls eye qualification at African Games

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• Benjamin Azamati will be seeking Olympic ticket during the African Games



## Voice of

## Graphic SPORTS

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# Leveraging the African Games for Olympic glory

*AS anticipation builds for the 13th African Games to grace the shores of Accra this month, Ghana stands at a pivotal juncture in its sporting journey. Hosting this prestigious continental event not only signifies a moment of pride for the nation, but also presents an unparalleled opportunity for Ghanaian athletes to etch their names in history.*

*The significance of the African Games cannot be overstated. Beyond the glitz and glamour, this event serves as a crucible where talent meets opportunity, where dreams are realised, and where nations showcase their prowess on the grandest stage. For Ghana, hosting the African*

*Games represents more than just a chance to display our hospitality; it's a golden opportunity to harness the full potential of our athletes.*

*As we set our sights on Paris for the 2024 Olympic Games, the African Games emerge as a critical stepping stone for our athletes to secure qualification. With no Ghanaian athlete having clinched direct entry to the Olympics thus far, the stakes are higher than ever. However, amidst these challenges lies immense promise. Across eight sporting disciplines at the African Games, Ghanaian athletes have the chance to punch their tickets to Paris in athletics, badminton, cycling, tennis, table tennis, triathlon, swimming, and wrestling.*

*The head of Ghana's contingent for the 2024 Olympic Games, Isaac Duah Aboagye, revealed to the Graphic Sports (see page 4) that as of now, no Ghanaian athlete has secured direct qualification to the Olympics, but he remains confident that the African Games will pave the way for their participation.*

*The importance of the African Games transcends mere qualification. It's a platform for Ghanaian athletes to shine brighter than ever before, to defy limits, and to showcase their mettle on home soil. With meticulous preparations already underway, spearheaded by the Ghana Olympic Committee, our athletes are gearing up to seize this momentous opportunity.*

*One cannot overlook the potential for Ghana to*

*achieve its highest-ever medal haul at the African Games. As the host country, we have the advantage of familiarity with the terrain, the support of our passionate fans, and the backing of a nation rallying behind our athletes. Success at the African Games not only bolsters our medal prospects but also ignites a flame of national pride, inspiring future generations of athletes to dream big.*

*Yet, let us not forget that the true measure of success extends beyond podium finishes. The successful hosting of such a continental extravaganza hinges not only on infrastructure and logistics but also on the triumphs of our home team. It's about captivating the hearts and minds of Ghanaians, instilling a sense of pride in our collective investment in sport, and fostering a culture of unwavering support for our athletes.*

*In essence, the Graphic Sports maintains that the African Games represent Ghana's finest hour—a chance to showcase our sporting prowess, to make history, and to pave the way for a brighter future. As we embark on this journey, let us stand united in our support for our athletes, for they carry the hopes and dreams of a nation on their shoulders. Together, let us seize this moment to shine, to excel, and to etch our names in the annals of sporting greatness.*

# Racheal Kundananji: Zambian's journey to world record transfer

• Contined from last week

**H**E was first alerted to her ability after watching some grainy YouTube footage of the then talented teenager scoring a hat-trick against Ghana in a friendly ahead of the 2018 Women's Africa Cup of Nations.

"Racheal is dedicated, humble and obviously an unbelievable goalscorer," Atkins said.

"She always had raw speed but has improved so much in terms of her finishing, her tactical awareness and her physicality in the past few years.

"It is great to see someone who started with nothing has managed to reach the level she has."

Kundananji's success has required a few career steps.

The first significant one was in 2019 with a transfer from Zambia's Indeni Roses to BIK Kazygurt, the biggest women's club in Kazakhstan.

It was a dramatic shift for the then 18-year-old, who was delighted to be earning a guaranteed \$1,500 per month - with free accommodation included.

She secured a move to Liga F side Eibar in 2021 before her abilities were spotted by Madrid CF, and it is in the Spanish capital that Kundananji has really flourished.

Fellow Zambia forward Prisca Chilufya is confident her team-mate can handle the pressure that will inevitably accompany her

record price tag.

"She's very determined and very hard-working. That's why she has been dominating in every league she has played in," Chilufya told BBC Sport Africa.

"She is someone you want on your team because she has a good heart and she also makes life easy on the pitch."

Chilufya is hopeful that Kundananji's high-profile move to the USA will help to further the growth of women's football in their homeland.

"I think this news will be shocking to many because Zambia has never had any expensive players and women's football is still developing in the country," Chilufya said.

"It's amazing to know that Zambia has the most expensive player in the world. Players like Racheal have played a big role in inspiring people."

Although Kundananji has made history with her move, Atkins is expecting the world transfer record to tumble regularly in the coming years.

"We've taken a big leap up now in the record, but that could easily be broken in the next six to 12 months," Atkins said.

"The NWSL is now reacting after perhaps realising it had slipped down the pecking order in terms of women's leagues."

It is a huge move for Kundananji, who is swapping the 3,500-seater Estadio Fernando Torres in Madrid for the 18,000-capacity PayPal Park in San Jose.

She admitted she will miss life in Spain

but is relishing the prospect of proving herself in the NWSL.

"My team-mates in Madrid have been my family and it was so difficult for me to make this decision," Kundananji said.

"I won't put myself under pressure. My

goal is to continue where I ended in Madrid and to achieve bigger things.

"I'll never give up because if I give up, I'll disappoint the young girls who message me asking advice about how they can get the best out of themselves." — BBC



• Racheal Kundananji