

**Schlupp
scores
goal-of-the
season
contender**

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• Aboubakar Ouattara
— Hearts coach

• Coach Prosper
Narteh Ogum — Kotoko

Be patient with coaches

• Akonnor urges Kotoko, Hearts

By Peter Sarbah

Former Black Stars coach, Charles Kvablan Akonnor, has offered a critical diagnosis of the persistent coaching turnover at Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko, attributing it to the clubs' struggle

in the league this season. Akonnor, who himself has coached both giants of Ghanaian football, highlighted the detrimental impact of the clubs' impatience with coaches and their fixation on instant results as the cause of the decline of

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**Bastie must
hang gloves
now — Believer**

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Voice of

Graphic SPORTS

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Appointment of ex-players for national teams right decision

In recent weeks, the Ghana Football Association (GFA) has made commendable strides by appointing former players, including Yaw Preko, Godwin Attram and Laryea Kingston, as coaches for various junior national teams.

This decision represents a pivotal moment for Ghanaian football, as it recognises the invaluable expertise and experience these individuals bring to the development of young talents.

The appointment of former players as coaches is not merely a symbolic gesture but a strategic move to leverage their on-field accomplishments and

insights for the benefit of the next generation.

These coaches possess a deep understanding of the game, acquired through years of dedication and perseverance at the highest levels of football. Their guidance has the potential to shape the future of Ghanaian football by nurturing raw talent and instilling essential skills and values in young players.

The success stories of former players turned coaches in Europe, such as Xavi Alonso, Wayne Rooney, Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard, serve as compelling examples of the transformative impact that player-coaches can have on the sport.

These individuals have seamlessly transitioned from playing careers to coaching roles, demonstrating their ability to inspire and lead both on and off the field.

However, while celebrating these appointments, it is imperative to address the broader issues facing Ghanaian football, particularly concerning the treatment and support of national team coaches. The disproportionate focus on the Black Stars, to the neglect of other national teams, is a concerning trend that undermines the holistic development of football in Ghana.

It is unacceptable that coaches of junior national teams, who play a crucial role in nurturing talent and serving as feeder systems to the senior team, are left without contracts and proper remuneration.

This lack of support not only demoralises coaches but also creates fertile ground for corruption and unethical behaviour, as coaches may resort to alternative means to sustain themselves financially.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the GFA and relevant authorities to rectify this disparity by ensuring that all national team coaches are provided with contracts and fair compensation for their services.

Investing in the professional development and well-being of coaches across all levels of Ghanaian football is essential for fostering a sustainable and inclusive football ecosystem.

Furthermore, transparent and accountable governance mechanisms must be put in place to prevent allegations of extortion and misconduct, which can tarnish the reputation of Ghanaian football. By prioritising the welfare of coaches and implementing robust regulatory frameworks, the GFA can safeguard the integrity and credibility of the sport while promoting equal opportunities for all stakeholders.

The appointment of former players as coaches for Ghana's junior national teams represents a positive step towards revitalising the country's football landscape.

However, true progress can only be achieved by extending support and recognition to all national team coaches, irrespective of their level or team affiliation.

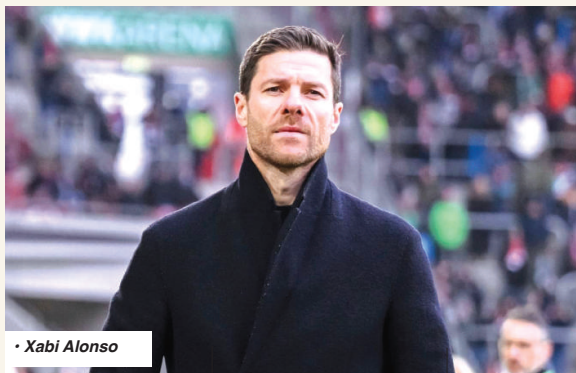
By empowering coaches and fostering a culture of professionalism and accountability, Ghana can realise its full potential as a powerhouse of African football.

Alonso and Real Madrid: The hidden details behind a possible agreement

"**H**IS father was a player and then a coach... Then he [Xabi] became a very high-level player. His position on the pitch and knowledge of the game was excellent. He has played in Spain, England, and Germany. He was coached by Guardiola at Bayern, by myself and then by Ancelotti at Real Madrid, and then by Benitez at Liverpool. So if you add all that up, Xavi has all the conditions to become a very good coach," shared Mourinho during an interview back in 2019.

Funny enough, Mourinho shared those statements just months before Xabi Alonso took his first job as a coach. The 'Special One' saw something special in Xabi.

Xabi Alonso has already made history with Bayer Leverkusen. The Spaniard picked up the German team on the verge of relegation during the 2022 campaign, and just one year and a



• Xabi Alonso

half later, they are the Bundesliga champions.

His remarkable coaching skills have not gone unnoticed across Europe. Some of Europe's greatest clubs have lucrative deals to secure his services, big teams like Liverpool and Bayern Munich.

Nevertheless, Xabi Alonso has a clear road map and a path forward with his project at Bayer Leverkusen. The Spanish coach confirmed he would continue in the German squad during the 2024-2025 season, and help navigate the teams in the Champions League.

club. He has been a crucial figure alongside his son Davide in this rejuvenated Real Madrid squad, mentoring players like Camavinga, Bellingham, and Vini Jr. Reasons for which the club has signed him on for two more seasons, until 2026.

However, according to many Spanish journalists, Xabi Alonso has a verbal agreement with Real Madrid with regards to his future as a coach at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Carlo Ancelotti is a Real Madrid icon at this point, with an incredible legacy at the

coach might be leaving the Santiago Bernabeu in 2025, making way for Xabi Alonso, whom he already coached as a player during his time at Real Madrid and Bayern Munich.

Of course, neither club nor player has confirmed such an agreement, but Fernando Carro, CEO of Bayer Leverkusen, shared "it is possible that at some point in his career, Xabi ends up managing Real Madrid," during an interview for AS.

With the possible arrival of Xabi Alonso at the Bernabeu, many fans are speculating whether he will bring Florian Wirtz with him to the Spanish capital. The young Leverkusen jewel would be an ideal replacement for the veteran Toni Kroos.

This is just another chapter within Real Madrid's and Xabi Alonso's love story, but many 'Madridistas' already eagerly await the arrival of the Basque coach.--
MSN