

Govt holds key to Otto Addo's future

• Hints GFA spokesperson

Story: Maurice Quansah

THE future of Black Stars Head Coach, Otto Addo, remains uncertain as the Ghana Football Association (GFA) initiates critical consultations with key stakeholders, including the government, to determine his fate after the GFA Executive Council

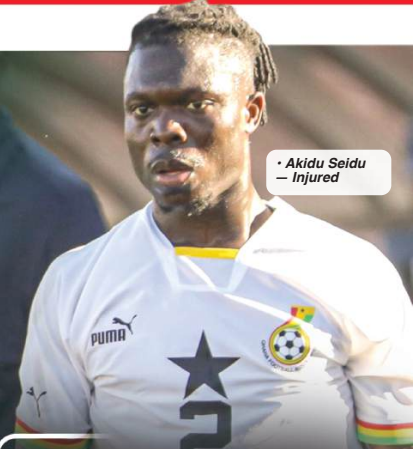
(ExCo) was unable to reach a decision during a tense review meeting last Wednesday, leaving the coach's position in limbo.

The 47-year-old coach is under intense scrutiny following

• Continued on back page



• Coach Otto Addo – In limbo



• Akidu Seidu – Injured

Issahaku, Seidu out of World Cup qualifiers

• Black Stars doctor bemoans ligament injuries

— Back Page



Bournemouth to accept Liverpool's offer for Semenyo

— Page 7

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Otto Addo's future: Ghana football's moment for bold, decisive decisions

THE fate of Black Stars Head Coach, Otto Addo, hangs precariously as the Ghana Football Association (GFA) and the government deliberate over his future. Last week's tense GFA Executive Council (ExCo) review meeting ended inconclusively, leaving the 47-year-old coach's position in limbo. With Ghana's recent failure to qualify for the 2025 Africa

Cup of Nations (AFCON), a decision is overdue—not just about Otto Addo's tenure but also the future direction of Ghanaian football.

This failure marks an unprecedented low for a nation that once dominated African football. Finishing bottom of their qualifying group, Ghana failed to secure a single victory against Niger, Angola, and Sudan. This dismal performance has sparked fierce debate within the GFA, with some ExCo members insisting on the coach's dismissal due to poor team management and failure to meet key performance indicators. Others advocate for continuity, urging the GFA to focus on systemic reforms rather than a hasty managerial change.

Adding a layer of complexity is the financial burden of terminating Otto Addo's contract. With the government funding national team coaches' salaries, its input will be decisive. Past experiences with compensation disputes have left the FA wary, with recent payouts to sacked coaches like Milovan Rajevac and Charles Akonnor draining resources. These missteps have fuelled calls for a more measured and strategic approach.

Otto Addo has acknowledged responsibility, presenting a comprehensive report outlining failures and proposing solutions, including strengthening his technical team. However, public confidence is waning, and many demand immediate change. Yet, replacing

the coach without addressing deeper issues risks perpetuating the cycle of underperformance.

The Black Stars' struggles reflect broader challenges in Ghanaian football—lack of investment in youth development, inadequate technical expertise, and weak player management. Frequent managerial changes—five since 2019—have done little to reverse the decline, exposing a lack of long-term planning and vision. The GFA now stands at a crossroads. Should they retain Otto Addo, they must define clear performance benchmarks and support him in addressing the team's deficiencies. If they opt for a new coach, the selection must be part of a larger strategy prioritising stability and structural reform.

This is an opportunity for the GFA and the government to rethink their approach and implement reforms that will revitalise the sport. The upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers demand urgency and decisive action. The road ahead will be challenging, but with bold leadership, Ghanaian football can rise from its current state of despair. For the GFA, this is a moment to prove they can steer the Black Stars towards renewed success. For Otto Addo, it is a chance to defy critics and rebuild his legacy. Ghanaian football deserves nothing less than a transformative vision to reclaim its place on the global stage.

Aguero talks Messi, Man City and Club World Cup

TWO of the participating sides at next year's FIFA Club World Cup, scheduled to kick off on June 15 in the United States, are deeply familiar to Sergio Aguero.

Manchester City's all-time top scorer, the Argentinian is widely regarded as being one of the finest strikers to emerge from South America in modern times. The man known as Kun, who will turn 37 just days before the start of the tournament, could well have featured prominently at it were it not for his decision to hang up his boots on 30 October 2021 after being diagnosed with a potentially life-threatening cardiac arrhythmia.

Even after retirement, Aguero continues to spread joy, such as in December 2022, when, where he celebrated Argentina's FIFA World Cup™ triumph with ecstatic former team-mates at Qatar's Lusail Stadium.

He was also present to witness Manchester City's maiden UEFA Champions league title in June 2023, when they finally landed Europe's most sought-after prize with victory over Inter Milan in the final. In fact, it was that victory that stamped City's ticket to the first edition of the 32-team Club World Cup, a tournament that will see the best teams from every confederation battle it out for global supremacy.

"It'll be a lot of fun seeing best teams in the world in one place. It should be a really nice experience for the fans as well as the players," Aguero told FIFA. "It's something new that all the players want to win, and so they'll be focused and determined to be the inaugural champions. Being the first to do something is always good, and the Club

World Cup is no different."

A product of Independiente's youth academy, Aguero made his first division debut aged barely 15 and quickly became one of the most exciting prospects in Argentinian football. By the time he left for Europe three years later, Aguero had left his mark on the Avellaneda side and thrilled its legions of fans.

He had also started to build his legacy with the Argentinian national team, with whom he triumphed at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2021 Copa America, being part of the Albiceleste side that ended a long trophy drought at the latter. As well as being a two-time winner of the FIFA U-20 World Cup™, he also participated in three senior World Cups, finishing runner-up at Brazil 2014.

Having fought countless battles in South America, Aguero knows the essence of its football well: "These [Club World Cup] games will be an opportunity to show everyone the South American mindset and nature. I expect our sides to really battle—it's something that comes natural to we South Americans.

"I also believe it's very important for clubs to be at this tournament. It's not going to be easy, but I think they'll do their utmost to go as far as possible and ensure South America comes out of it with its head held high."

His former Albiceleste strike partner, who also happens to be one of his best friends, will be one of biggest attractions of next year's Club World Cup. We are, of course, referring to Lionel Messi, who roomed with

Aguero whenever the pair were on international duty.

"We know that Messi is one of the players that everyone wants to see, so it'll be very nice to see Inter Miami compete at the tournament, especially with Leo in the team. He's going to want to give his all as he doesn't like to lose anything.

"Opponents will need to be wary even if there's only a minute of two left on the clock, as he's capable of punishing you with one of his thunderous strikes, precision-guided free-kicks or just a delightful bit of play out of the blue. And that's because he's the best player in the world."

As well as counting on the support of one of their biggest fans, Manchester City will start among the title favourites in the USA. As the club's all-time top scorer, Kun says he knows the secret to their enormous success: "They're always favourites, and it all comes down to their mentality, as it's not easy to always carry the tag of favourites. City are where they are because Guardiola knows how to keep that mindset.

"They've been doing the same thing for years, which is why they're favourites. Pep simply never rests. Nor will you see him playing a different

way; he's going to play the same way he always does, even if he loses. He's not going to change his style, and that's something positive. He's got a great bunch of players—a dream team you could say, and Pep knows how to talk to them."

Atletico Madrid, where the Argentinian began his European adventure, will also be at next year's event. Despite signing for Los Colchoneros at just 18, he soon became a household name and helped them to UEFA Europa League glory in 2010 before moving to Manchester the following year. More than a decade later, the Madrid club remain a force in Spanish and European football.

"It means a great deal for Atletico to take part in this tournament. They deserve it, having performed consistently well. They're a tough team—very strong defensively—and the arrival of Julian [Alvarez] should give them another outlet for their counterattacks. El Cholo (Simeone) has been there for many years and knows the club and squad inside out, so that could be an important factor at the Club World Cup."

Aguero concluded.—
FIFA.

• Sergio Aguero

