



Sinner, Keys grab Aussie Open trophies

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• Antoine Semenyo

• Inaki Williams — Has scored just one goal in 21 appearances for Ghana

Essien: Stop blame game

• Defends Inaki, others over Black Stars form

Story: Maurice Quansah

GHANAIAN football legend Michael Essien has strongly dismissed claims that players born abroad struggle to perform for the Black Stars due to cultural disconnect, calling the suggestion unfounded and unfair.

Essien, a pivotal figure in Ghana's football history, responded to criticisms aimed at dual-nationality players such as Spain-born Inaki Williams and London-born Antoine Semenyo. Despite excelling at their clubs—Williams has been a key player for Athletic Bilbao—these players have struggled to replicate their

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Voice of Graphic SPORTS

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Visionary leadership needed for Ghanaian sports, Mr Adams

THE Graphic Sports congratulates the Minister-designate for Sports and Recreation, Kofi Adams, on his nomination under President John Dramani Mahama's "Resetting" agenda. Mr Adams, as you prepare to take the helm of this critical ministry, it is important to acknowledge the immense potential that lies ahead and the significant responsibility you now bear in transforming Ghana's sporting landscape.

The Ministry of Sports and Recreation is far more than an ordinary government department. It is the heart of the nation's sporting identity, playing a pivotal role in uniting Ghanaians across various walks of life. From football's unwavering grip on our collective passion to the successes of our athletes on the global stage, sports is central to our socio-economic and political fabric. Under your leadership, it is imperative that the ministry not only responds to the needs of the people but also plays a transformative role in Ghana's development.

While your background may not be directly rooted in

sports, your nomination presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is clear: to prove your critics wrong by providing the visionary leadership needed to align the ministry with President Mahama's transformative agenda. The opportunity is equally significant—to redefine the ministry's legacy and set a new direction that will enhance the sector's impact on national development.

As you step into this role, understand that the scrutiny will be intense. Ghana's sports media, particularly the Sports Writers Association of Ghana (SWAG), is both influential and relentless. Every decision you make will be under the spotlight, with praise when successes occur and fierce criticism when challenges arise. It is vital that you approach this responsibility with resilience, humility, and a deep sense of purpose.

Over the years, Ghanaian sports has been plagued by a narrative of interference and failure, often attributed to "unseen hands" or a so-called "mafia." However, decades of experience show that success in this role is largely dependent on integrity, vision, and hard work. Ministers who have served with clarity and dedication have left with their reputations intact or enhanced. On the other hand, those driven by self-interest have often exited under a cloud of scandal. Your tenure, Mr Adams, will be determined by your ability to stay true to the values that will drive success and national pride.

The demands of this ministry are immense. To succeed, you must hit the ground running. There is no room for learning on the job in a sector as dynamic and high-profile as sports. Your leadership must bring stability and structure to an often chaotic environment. Under President Mahama's

resetting vision, your role will be to unite the various stakeholders, from football associations to grassroots organizers, ensuring that all parties work toward common goals.

Equally crucial will be your ability to engage with international sports bodies and business partners. Ghana must position itself as a competitive force in the global sporting arena, attracting investment, fostering partnerships, and advancing the country's profile internationally. Financial independence will be key to preserving the integrity of the ministry and avoiding the pitfalls that have plagued previous administrations.

Above all, the people of Ghana want results. This is not a time for empty promises. Your legacy will be defined by tangible achievements, from the development of grassroots sports to the enhancement of facilities and performance on the international stage. The expectations are high, but so are the opportunities.

Your success, Mr. Adams, will not only elevate Ghanaian sports but also contribute to President Mahama's broader vision of a reset for national priorities. The sports sector stands at a crossroads, and the path you choose will shape the future of sports in Ghana for generations to come.

Mr Adams, you are not alone in this journey. The Graphic Sports will be a willing partner in driving transparency and accountability, while also holding your leadership to the highest standards. Together, we can chart a bold new course for Ghanaian sports. This is your moment to lead, inspire, and create a lasting legacy.

The nation is watching, and the ball is in your court.

What happened to Ryan Giggs' coaching career? (III)

By Chris Wathan, BBC Sport

THOSE close to Giggs insist he has not applied for any management roles, and that after a period of reflection and time with family, this year could see him devote more effort to a comeback. So how realistic is that?

"A manager is not just coaching a group of players, he is also an ambassador," says reputation management expert Tim Jotischky of the PHA Group.

"Although Giggs was not convicted of any criminal offence, the court case revealed deeply unedifying behaviour, and any club would have to weigh that up when considering whether he would be a suitable appointment.

"They would have to think about the reaction from sponsors and commercial partners, as well as supporters.

"Football's fanbase has changed dramatically in the last few years. More than one in four spectators attending Premier League matches are estimated to

be women, up from 15 per cent in 2005 when Giggs was in his pomp.

"Any club that appoints Giggs as manager would face a potential backlash from female fans that could extend to its commercial partners."

Jotischky believes it would be easier for Giggs to rebuild his career overseas, and added his best hope of landing a job in England would be to "find a club with a thick-skinned owner who is more concerned with on-the-field success than off-the-field optics".

"And if Giggs does, in time, land a managerial job he must be prepared to confront the allegations made against him," he added.

"He would need a media strategy to deal with the issue at the outset, or risk being dogged by endless questions about whether he is a suitable role model."

Away from Salford City, Giggs has plenty to keep himself busy.

He has taken a keen interest in the highly promising career of his

son Zach, who is in Sheffield United's youth system and was recently called up to the Wales Under-19s squad. And in November Giggs celebrated the birth of a baby daughter with his partner.

He is a co-owner, alongside former Old Trafford team-mate Gary Neville, of Manchester hotels The Stock Exchange and Hotel Football, alongside other business interests including a padel venture — a game he says he tries to play "pretty much every day".

But in terms of work, Giggs has said football management is where his heart lies, something he realised when he was placed in interim charge of Manchester United for four matches in 2014.

Instead, come April, he will resume a tour of 'An Evening With Ryan Giggs' speaking engagements in front of paying audiences. Last year brought similar appearances in Northampton, Radlett and Chester, with attendees paying up to £250 to have "a

chance to meet one of the greats of the game".

At one, Giggs again expressed his wish that he could return to management, saying: "I loved managing Wales, obviously. I do miss it, so hopefully."

But for now his wait continues, and it remains uncertain when —and if — that wait will end.



• Ryan Giggs is the Sporting Director of Salford City FC