

Asare vows to restore Hearts' glory

Story: Peter Sarbah

ACCRA Hearts of Oak captain and goalkeeper, Benjamin Asare, has reaffirmed his loyalty to the club by signing a two-year contract extension, vowing to play a leading role in restoring the Phobians to their former glory.

The 31-year-old shot-stopper, who joined Hearts last season from city rivals Accra Great Olympics, has grown into a talismanic figure for both club and country, establishing himself as the No.1 for the Black Stars and a key pillar in Coach Aboubacar Ouattara's team.

This season, Asare has been in scintillating form, making 20 Ghana Premier League

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Kudus linked with mega move to Chelsea

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Takyi draws inspiration from Azumah ahead of fight

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• Benjamin Asare
— New extended contract



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GOC at the crossroads: Prioritise vision, integrity, and competence

As the Ghana Olympic Committee (GOC) prepares for its all-important Elective Congress on April 26, the nation's sporting fraternity stands at a crucial crossroads. The baton of leadership is about to be passed on, and with it comes a responsibility far greater than electing a figurehead. Delegates must rise to the occasion — not with parochial loyalties or backroom deals — but with a bold, forward-looking vision rooted in competence, integrity, and an unshakable commitment to athlete welfare.

Last Saturday's Extraordinary Congress at the Accra International Conference Centre was a good example of the transparency and unity the GOC needs to progress.

Outgoing GOC President, Ben Nunoo Mensah, deserves commendation for steering the ship through choppy waters into calmer seas. His administration has been marked by financial transparency, discipline, and visionary thinking — qualities that were on full display during the recent Extraordinary Congress held at the Accra International Conference Centre.

At the heart of that congress was the revelation of a remarkable \$500,000 legacy fund — painstakingly saved over eight years — to complete the OlympAfrica Juvenile Sports Excellence Centre at Amasaman.

The tone of the congress was overwhelmingly positive. For the first time in the GOC's history, financial accounts — presented by Treasurer Frederick Acheampong — were received without objection or controversy. It was a proud moment for the GOC and a testament to the maturity and trust that now define its governance structure.

Voices from across the sporting spectrum, including athletics, cricket, kickboxing, and canoeing, offered praise while also making constructive suggestions. Importantly, no voices were raised in anger — just calls for continued progress and equal support across all federations. This calm, mature atmosphere must set the tone for the April 26 congress.

The Graphic Sports believes the Olympic Movement in Ghana is at the crossroads. This is no time to revert

to the chaos and rancour that previously characterised GOC elections. The stakes are too high. Ghana needs a leader who can unify the sports front, inspire trust, and continue the culture of good governance. A leader who will put athletes at the centre of every decision, work closely with national federations, and position Ghana for greater success at global events. It is a moment to choose leadership with a proven track record, one with the capacity to unite the sports front, prioritise athlete development and maintain Ghana's growing reputation on the international sporting stage.

Delegates must therefore look beyond personality, popularity, or past affiliations. The GOC deserves a president with competence, character, and a clear vision. Anything less would be a betrayal of the progress made and the dreams of countless young athletes across the country.

Mr Nunoo Mensah's parting message was as poignant as it was powerful. He urged delegates to elect leaders grounded in "credibility, integrity, selflessness and a track record of achievements." And rightly so. The legacy he leaves behind — including the still-unfinished Amasaman excellence centre — must be nurtured, not squandered.

The next GOC president must be more than just a familiar name — they must be a unifier, a visionary and a servant-leader. Ghana's Olympic dream depends on it.

Why Salah snubbed '£500m Saudi move' for Liverpool stay

MOHAMED Salah is staying at Liverpool, bringing one of the season's key storylines to a conclusion. At times, though, it seemed in doubt.

So what happened behind the scenes?

Was there a £500m offer from Saudi Arabia and how did the Egypt forward go from being unsure of his future to expressing delight at signing a deal that lasts until he turns 34?

Senior football correspondent Sami Mokbel reports...

Deal breakthrough came at end of March

When Salah set the cat among the pigeons about his future in November by saying he was 'more out than in', he wasn't being disingenuous.

Yet it was also not misleading to say the Egyptian always wanted to stay at Liverpool. The two stances weren't necessarily mutually exclusive.

It has always been Salah's ambition to extend his eight-year stay at Anfield — and news today of his new two-year contract will bring the 32-year-old's tenure at the club to a decade, should he see out the duration of the terms.

But the conditions — for both Salah and Liverpool — had to be right. Thankfully for the club's



- Mohamed Salah

supporters a middle ground was finally reached.

Sources close to the situation indicated a breakthrough in talks between Salah, his representative Ramy Abbas Issa and Liverpool sporting director Richard Hughes was reached at the end of March, with the formalities of the deal concluded earlier this week.

Indeed, in an interview with BBC Sport, left-back Andy Robertson revealed he only found out about Salah's new contract on Thursday.

Liverpool pushed boat out for 'special case'

Salah is not taking a pay cut to

stay at Liverpool - and will earn close to £400,000-per-week. The two-year contract offers him a level of security players of his age are not often afforded.

Liverpool have pushed the boat out, but haven't done so on a whim. Salah is a special case.

Replacing their talismanic attacker, who has made 54 goal contributions already this season, would be vastly difficult and, more pertinently, an expensive task.

Identifying a Salah replacement would be hard enough, but finding the sort of money to pull off such a deal would enter a higher plane of difficulty.

What appears to be Trent Alexander-Arnold's pending move to Real Madrid, when his contract expires this summer, would have provided Liverpool with greater financial leeway in their efforts to assemble financial packages to keep Salah and Virgil van Dijk, with the Dutchman expected to sign a new deal in the coming days.

Yet, while money is always a factor when it comes to contractual negotiations, it wasn't the determining consideration for a footballer at the peak of his powers.

Salah 'wanted elite sporting challenge'

If money was Salah's determining consideration, he'd have left Liverpool for the Saudi Pro League who, until as recently as last week, still believed they could attract him to the Middle East.

The financial lure of a move to Saudi Arabia was clear. The 'homecoming' of one of the greatest and recognisable Arab footballers - and the synergy, and earning power, for all parties was inescapable.

Indeed, sources have told BBC Sport that Salah was in line to earn at least £500m in Saudi — an eye-popping figure, although still short of the 1bn euros (€859m)

Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr was reportedly offered.

It was said the option of exploring a Saudi move was first raised with Salah last February - and that door will likely remain open in the future.

But, right now, the forward has put sporting ambition ahead of his wallet.

Salah's a player at the top of his game - those close to the frontman believe he has at least another three years at the highest level.

The evidence suggests as much. His physique is optimum and his levels of professionalism are obsessive.

Salah believes he still has more to accomplish in European football too, starting, of course, with winning Liverpool's 20th league title this season.

He has ambitions on winning the Ballon d'Or too, with fifth his highest placing in both 2019 and 2022.

Salah also wants to win the Champions League again, and ensure Liverpool remain at the pinnacle of English football.

Interestingly, it is said another one of the key factors in his decision to re-sign was a desire to compete among the elite to help prepare for Egypt's forthcoming World Cup and Africa Cup of Nations campaigns.—BBC