

• Jonathan Sowah —  
Medeama's hot shot

• John Antwi —  
Dreams FC

Impact of  
foreign  
coaches  
in Ghana  
league — Page 4

• Martinus  
Koopman

# Medeama, Dreams will take Africa by storm

## — Assure coaches

Story: Beatrice Laryea

THE head coaches of Medeama SC and Dreams FC, Evans Adotey and Karim Abdul Zito, have expressed their confidence in leading their sides to make an impact in this year's CAF Champions League and the CAF Confederation Cup respectively.

In separate interviews with the *Graphic Sports* yesterday, both coaches expressed their readiness to face the challenges that laid ahead despite being placed in demanding groups in their respective competitions.

Tough group  
Medeama were pooled in Group D of the Champions League where they face

record African champions Al Ahly, formidable Algerian champions CR Belouzzad and Tanzania's Young Africans.

Dreams FC, Ghana's FA Cup holders, have been pooled in Group C of the Confederation Cup with Nigeria's Rivers United, Club African from Tunisia and

• Continued on Back page

• Coach  
Kwasi Appiah

# Appiah begins Sudan adventure

## • Picks Ghanaian assistants — Back page

## Voice of

## Graphic SPORTS

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## Adequate preparation key to Medeama and Dreams FC's continental success

As Ghanaian sides Medeama SC and Dreams FC brace for a tough challenge in the group stage of the CAF Champions League and the CAF Confederation Cup, their coaches have indicated an unwavering determination to lead their respective teams to success on the continental stage. Placed in demanding groups last Friday after the draws, Ghana's representatives face a formidable challenge, but their determination and confidence shine through.

Medeama SC have been pooled in Group D of the Champions League, pitted against the record African champions, Al Ahly, the formidable Algerian champions, CR Belouizdad, and Tanzania's Young Africans. Dreams FC, the FA Cup holders, have been

drawn into Group C of the Confederation Cup, alongside Nigeria's Rivers United, Club Africain from Tunisia, and APC Lobito from Angola. These groups are a testament to the tough competition that lies ahead for coaches Augustine Evans Adotey of Medeama and Abdul Karim Zito of Dreams FC.

The importance of thorough preparation cannot be underestimated, especially considering the historical significance of these competitions for Ghanaian football. Once a powerhouse on the African continent, Ghana has witnessed a decline in its representation at the later stages of the CAF Champions League and the CAF Confederation Cup. It is a high time we restore our original quota and reclaim our status as a formidable force in African football.

The two coaches have voiced their confidence and determination to excel, and both emphasise the importance of setting clear objectives and focusing on the task at hand because they understand that success in these competitions is not just about talent but also about meticulous planning and preparation.

Coach Adotey has already dismissed the aura surrounding Al Ahly, a team with 11 CAF Champions League titles under their belt, saying he was unfazed by the preutation of their group rivals and that his side would be ready for the challenge ahead.

On the other hand, Coach Zito has also underscored his side's determination to make

a meaningful impact in the Confederation Cup.

Medeama SC earned their spot in the group stage by overcoming Horoya AC in the playoff round with a 4-3 aggregate victory. Dreams FC, on the other hand, secured their place after recording 3-2 aggregates over Milo FC and Kallon FC in the preliminary rounds. These achievements showcase their ability to face even stiffer competition in the upcoming tournaments.

Next week Medeama SC will represent Ghana in this year's Capital City Cup in Washington DC, USA, a competition that provides the Ghanaian champions with valuable international exposure ahead of the CAF Champions League group phase, which commences next month. It is an opportunity they must make good use of as the destiny of representation in the CAF Champions League and CAF Confederation Cup lies in the hands of the two clubs, Medeama SC and Dreams FC. Their performances are not just individual pursuits but also a reflection of Ghana's footballing prowess.

The Graphic Sports believes that in addition to the individual clubs' efforts, the government, Ghanaian football authorities, fans, and others stakeholders must rally behind these teams to excel in Africa.

## Playing in Saudi Arabia is wasted legacy

ZLATAN Ibrahimovic says footballers who move to Saudi Arabia risk their legacies becoming about money rather than talent.

The Swede, 42, retired in June at AC Milan after a trophy-laden career.

The former Manchester United and Paris St-Germain striker says he received offers from China and Saudi Arabia.

"I think players that reach a certain level, they have to stop at a certain stage - the big stage," he said.

High profile players including Cristiano Ronaldo, Riyad Mahrez, Karim Benzema and England midfielder Jordan Henderson have moved to Saudi Arabia in the last 12 months.

The Saudi Pro League has been on a mass recruitment drive since the start of 2023 and four of its top clubs - Al-Ahli, Al-Ittihad, Al-Hilal and Al-Nassr - were taken over by the state Public Investment Fund (PIF) which also owns Newcastle United earlier this year.

Having spent time playing for an array of Europe's most prestigious clubs, Ibrahimovic joined MLS side LA Galaxy from United in 2018 before returning for a second spell with AC Milan,



Zlatan Ibrahimovic

helping them win the title in 2021-22.

In his final season he only played four times and started one match, scoring one goal, following a series of injuries.

"I had an offer also from China, I had an offer also from Saudi," he said in an interview with Piers Morgan. "But the situation is, what do you want? What objectives do

you have?

"You have to be remembered for your talent, not for what you earned.

"What we are training every day for, what we are being recognised for is our talent, and that is what you want to be remembered for.

"You cannot [move to] a lower stage and finish your career in a different way. But some players

needed the situations where you can earn a lot of money because they didn't earn enough."

Saudi Arabia's increased investment in sport in recent years has proven controversial because of the country's poor human rights record, with the rights of women, treatment of LGBTQ+ people and the use of the death penalty coming under scrutiny.

Henderson, a vocal ally of the LGBTQ+ community during his time at Liverpool, was criticised after he made a surprise move to Steven Gerrard's Al-Ettifaq. He later said the criticism, which included one LGBTQ+ fans' group saying he had "lost the respect of so many people", "really hurt" and that "money has never been a motivation."

Ibrahimovic says the moral concerns raised by playing in Saudi Arabia would not be a problem for him.

"Listen, wherever you play football, it's football," he added. "Football connects people. It's a dream we share.

"As a professional football player, as long as you play football [that's enough]. And Saudi is growing. MLS is growing. China had a peak and then I don't know [why] the situation changed there.

"But a moral thing? No. We do things for ourselves and our family. Who will judge you in five or 10 years when you have a wealthy, healthy life?"

"Nothing is for free - you [Morgan] don't work for free, I don't work for free. I don't need money, but I am very expensive."--  
BBC