

# Ayew rewarded with new Palace deal

## Sports Desk Report

Crystal Palace have rewarded Jordan Ayew with a contract extension and he is happy to stay at Selhurst Park for another season. The 31-year-old has put pen to paper on a new deal with the Eagles to extend his stay at the London club until the

summer of 2024. Ayew has made 167 appearances for Palace in all competitions, scoring 18 goals. He won the club's Player of the Season award in the 2019-20 campaign. "I'm happy," Ayew told the South London Press

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# Ofori: World Cup disappointment behind me

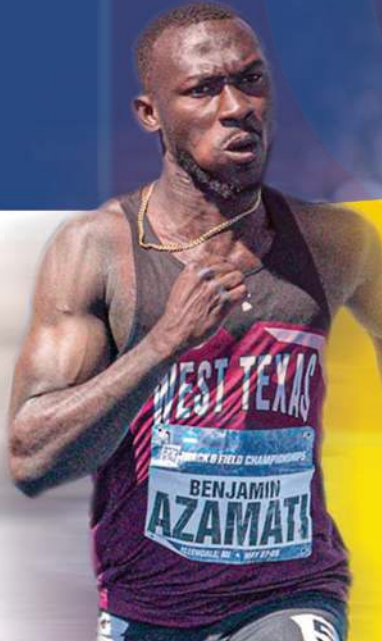
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• Richard Ofori — Has been out of action since November last year

# Azamati starts season in blistering form

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## Voice of

## Graphic SPORTS

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## Will Nora Hauptle's wand change Queens' fortunes?

**F**ROM being the second best only to Nigeria on the African continent and being a force to reckon with, Ghana's senior female national team, Black Queens, have struggled to hold a place in the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) since their last appearance in 2018 (which they hosted and flopped) and have failed to grab a spot to the Women's World Cup since their last outing in 2007.

The Ghana Football Association (GFA) is looking to stop the decline and help the Queens to rediscover their former glory and last January, hired a foreign coach, Nora Hauptle, from Switzerland to take over from Mercy Tagoe Quarcoo, as it seeks to get the team back to winning ways.

While bringing in a foreign coach is no news to the Black Stars, it is certainly a new venture for the Queens as this is the first time an expatriate has been put in charge as 19

coaches have been appointed to handle the team over the years.

Coach Hauptle and her assistants have already got down to work and they have held screening exercises and training sessions as well as three international friendly matches against Benin, Togo and just last week, Senegal.

For the first time in the history of the Queens, they took advantage of a FIFA international friendly schedule and at the request of the coach, Ghana hosted Senegal in a two-game friendly which they won 3-0 in the first and 1-0 in the second of the games both played at the Accra Stadium.

It is early days yet, but followers of women's football are happy about the improvement and work ethics being seen in the team as the Queens.

Success and good performance in football as modern-day results have shown with South Africa and Morocco, as examples, are based on talent and skill as well as the resources and support in the form of more matches which helped the team to be consistent and got the needed exposure and experience.

In Ghana, there is no doubt that there is enough talent and also technical competencies, however, the logistics and support systems have been lacking. It is in this regard that the

Graphic Sports welcomes the new lease of life being blown in to the camp of the Queens.

In the past, requests to get the Queens such international friendlies were met with the 'no money syndrome' which meant that the team only got to train and play when they had international assignments, or when they were invited to similar international friendlies by other countries, a situation that saw the Queens prepare in a rush and got embarrassed with defeats.

Hopefully, the tenure of Coach Hauptle will bring in all the positive changes needed and also the support they require to bring them back to their former glory of being among the best on the continent, helping in the technical development of players, as well as the general progress of women's football in Ghana.

When the date is confirmed, the Queens will be in Abidjan for the third West Africa Football Union (WAFU) Zone B tournament, one they have won (in 2018) and also won bronze (in 2019) and so it will not be out of place to expect them to do well at that tournament.

However, for the Graphic Sports, it will be looking out keenly what further technical progress the team would show.

# Senegal's Cubs want to continue African dominance

**A**FTER the senior's victory at the Cup of Nations in Cameroon, the Beach Soccer team in 2022, the African Nations Championship (CHAN) conquest and the Under-20 victory early this year, the onus will be on the Under-17 team to continue the continental dominance by the West African nation.

The performances of these different teams have raised expectation among the Senegalese and they will hope to see their young boys lift a new trophy, which will be their first ever in this age category.

Senegal have been drawn in Group A alongside hosts Algeria, Congo and Somalia.

The Young Teranga Cubs are coached by Saliou Serigne Dia and he knows what the public expects of him ahead of the tournament.

The former international has curved his coaching niche having worked at local clubs like AS



Senegal's Lions Cubs are among the competition's favourites

Douanes and has also coached the national U-23 team.

He also led the Senegalese team to clinch the football title at the 2015 African Games in Brazzaville, Congo.

The former Aspire Academy trainer is often hailed for his humility and tactical acumen, but above all, is also astute in his work.

He led the juniors to the final of the UFOA qualification tournament and despite losing to

Mali, showed that his side had class and quality and he will be looking to show all that on the continental stage when the Senegalese land in Algeria.

Coach Dia says his young team are bracing for a tough contest as they aim to continue the country's dominance of African competitions.

"It's the finals so we don't expect small teams. We expect to meet very good teams. It's on us to continue the work we started

long time ago. We are up against Algeria that have been preparing for two years. South Sudan who are regional champions and regional vice champions Congo. We are up against rigorous opponents.

"We are trying to be more ambitious as it's the moment for Senegalese football. Be reminded that we are African champions and our home based team is in the CHAN final. So we have to prepare per these standards."

## History in the competition

This will be Senegal's third appearance at the tournament, having previously played in 2011 and 2019, and bowing out in the group phase in both.

Expectation is high for this new generation of young stars to turn the tide and see the Senegalese improve on previous performances.

## Players to watch:

The team is hugely talented, but one to watch out for is forward Amara Diouf. Regularly playing in the Under-19 category, Diouf comes from the famed Generation Foot Academy which has borne some world class footballers like Sadio Mane.

He is a modern winger with powerful and punchy pace and knows how to create danger as well as having an eye for goal. He scored twice in the regional qualifiers against Cape Verde, goals that underlined his quality.

Apart from Diouf, Senegal can also count on Alpha Toure.

The young defender, who also plays for Generation Foot, carries the weight of skipping the team and has shown immense ability in winning duels and leading the team from the back. --cafonline