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Cote d'Ivoire can't stop US

Confident: Coach Yusif Basigi

Stella Nyamekye – Black Princesses captain

Insist Princesses coach after clearing first hurdle

Story: Rosalind K. Amoh

ASTERLING overall performance, crowned with three goals, was how Ghana's Under-20 women's football team, the Black Princesses, began their campaign as the maiden West Africa Football Union (WAFU) Zone B tournament kicked off in Kumasi last Saturday.

Not only was it a good start but also good enough to push the Princesses to their dream to 'host and win' the competition which has six other teams vying for honours. At the Baba Yara Stadium, goals from Maafia Nyame (35th), Mary Amponsah (61st) and captain Stella Nyamekye (68th) helped the Princesses to prevail against a difficult Beninois side in their

opening Group A encounter. Having gotten over the first game blues, the Princesses will now have to wait till Sunday (May 27), for their second group game as their group have only three teams, with Cote d'Ivoire and Benin set to play

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Voice of Graphic SPORTS

MONDAY, May 22 — 28, 2023

Ghana Football School to pave way for a bright future

There has been mixed reviews of the unveiling last week by the Ghana Football Association (GFA) of a proposed Ghana Football School in partnership with leading educational institutions which the football governing body believes is a significant step forward to ensure the development of the football enterprise in Ghana.

According to GFA President, Kurt Simeon-Okraku, the Ghana Football School aims to bridge key knowledge gaps in modern football administration by providing comprehensive capacity building programs. By focusing on areas such as football governance, marketing and merchandising, sports law, player agency, and more, the school seeks to enhance the skills and expertise of football administrators, coaches, and other stakeholders involved in Ghanaian football. This holistic approach recognizes the multifaceted nature of the football industry and the need for well-rounded professionals to drive its progress.

One of the primary benefits of the Ghana Football

School is the creation of new career pathways, especially for retired footballers. Transitioning from a successful playing career can be challenging for many athletes, and the school offers them an opportunity to gain valuable knowledge and skills that can be applied in various roles within the football industry. Whether it is football administration, coaching, sports law, or player agency, the capacity building provided by the school equips retired footballers with the tools they need to make a successful transition and continue contributing to the sport they love.

Moreover, the establishment of the Ghana Football School holds immense potential for the future development of Ghanaian football. By addressing knowledge gaps and improving the competence and professionalism of football administrators and other stakeholders, the school lays the foundation for a stronger and more sustainable football ecosystem in the country. Through comprehensive training in areas such as governance, marketing, and sports law, the school ensures that the Ghana Football Association can effectively implement club licensing regulations, enhance marketing strategies, promote player welfare, and strengthen the overall football infrastructure.

Functional skillsets play a vital role in developing a modern football ecosystem, and the Ghana Football School focuses on cultivating expertise in various key areas. Proficiency in football administration is essential for effective governance, financial management, and strategic planning. The knowledge of marketing and merchandising principles equips professionals

with the skills to promote Ghanaian football, secure sponsorships, and generate revenue. Understanding sports law is crucial for managing legal challenges, while expertise in player agency ensures the welfare and professional growth of football players.

Additionally, proficiency in sports medicine, media relations, and coaching is fundamental for player health and performance optimization, effective communication with stakeholders, and talent development, respectively. By developing these functional skillsets, the Ghana Football School empowers individuals to contribute to the growth and success of Ghanaian football in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

The Graphic Sports believes that the establishment of the Ghana Football School in partnership with leading educational institutions is a significant milestone for Ghanaian football as it would provide capacity-building programmes that bridge knowledge gaps in modern football administration and enhances the skills and expertise of football administrators, coaches, and other stakeholders in the country.

This will, to a large extent, also create new career pathways for retired footballers and the development of a stronger football ecosystem contribute to the overall growth and success of Ghanaian football in an ecosystem where professionalism, competence, and excellence thrive.

Radebe demands reforms in South Africa football

FORMER national team captain Lucas Radebe has called for reform of the "politics involved" in South African football.

The former Leeds United centre back, 54, made his international debut against Cameroon in 1992 in the country's first post-apartheid match.

Radebe also led the side at the 1998 and 2002 World Cups but believes the exclusion of former players is adding to the decline in the country's fortunes since hosting the global event in 2010.

"Most of us who have played the game are not involved in the structures of the game," Radebe told the BBC's *Africa Daily* podcast.

"Obviously, with the politics that is involved in the game, it becomes very stressful for individuals like us to get involved in the game and make sure that the game continues to improve in the country and we sustain that.

"We can't have a great team in 1996 and have a great — a better team — in 2010, but then after that, with all the facilities that we have, it becomes a big problem."

Back to basics

Radebe spent 11 seasons in the Premier League with Leeds and appeared 70 times for Bafana Bafana — the nickname of the national side which translates from Swati to: "the boys, the boys".

In 1996, Radebe helped his country to the Africa Cup of Nations, hosted in South Africa, but that remains their only continental title.

"We have to restructure to see the great Bafana Bafana coming back. We've got the talent, you can see but we can't sustain it," added Radebe.

"We're not consistent enough to be able to say that we can compete now and get to that level.

"We see players that are on form playing for Bafana Bafana

— well, if they're on form, they're not being chosen, which doesn't bring stability to the national team.

"So for me, if you have to improve you need to get relevant people in football to get involved. Sit down around the table. Let's go back to basics."

South Africa had been one of the four original teams that formed the first Africa Cup of Nations but were disqualified due to apartheid.

Following their 1996 victory they were losing finalists to Egypt in 1998 and won the third placed play-off, beating Tunisia on penalties, in 2000.

Radebe believes the subsequent years have been a dramatic underperformance - including when hosting the event against in 2013 — from a side that should be a major team on the continent.

"There's no proper development, where you can get the local players getting involved in football and locally

because there's no scouts," Radebe continued.

"Everyone now, since football has become big business, are looking to buy from outside the country. They need to buy players and import them.

"Well for me becomes a big problem because we don't get the talent that we need. And we don't develop it properly.

"It doesn't only start at club level, but it starts with agents. Most of them they're looking at quick success.

"They're looking for readymade players so there is no time or they don't give time for players to develop and obviously local football suffers."

Improved organisation needed

Radebe points directly to Uganda goalkeeper Denis Onyango, who plays for Mamelodi Sundowns, as a prime example of the type of player that South Africa needs to attract.

"As long as we have the quality, I don't have a problem with that," Radebe said. "But we can't have players that are not going to improve our game.

"Denis Onyango is a quality player but the problem is when we have more players that don't belong to the country.

"The players that play here in South Africa playing for their countries like Malawi, Zimbabwe and playing against us — those teams are better organised than us.

"It's easy for us to point fingers. Yes, it's true that we should empower ourselves but, again, we need the help of our association.

"They should have actually structured somehow a legends forum or a legends facility where we can come back and then we can be part of the national team going forward in the structures, empowering us for future succession plans."