

GFA ExCo members must go!

• **New Edubiase boss fires**

Story: Peter Sarbah

THE bankroller of Division One League (DOL) side, New Edubiase United, Abdul Salam Yakubu, has called for an outright rejection of the current Ghana Football

Association (GFA) Executive Committee (ExCo) as the football fraternity storms the Great Hall of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi today for its 29th Ordinary Congress.

He said the slump of the various national teams in international competitions in recent times, coupled with the poor standard of the

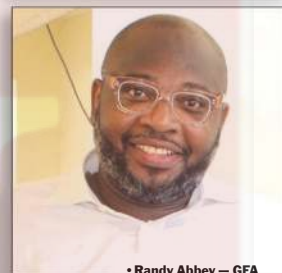
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• Kurt Okraku – GFA President



• Mark Addo – FA Vice-president



• Randy Abbey – GFA ExCo member



• Abdul Salam Yakubu – New Edubiase owner



Akonnor cries for GH¢275k salary arrears

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Palmer drops from GFA contest

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Voice of

Graphic SPORTS

MONDAY, July 10 — 16, 2023

GFA Congress, dress rehearsal for October elections

THE Great Hall of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) will boil today when the football fraternity gathers for the 29th Ordinary Congress of the Ghana Football Association (GFA).

The end-of-season convocation is expected to attract the movers and shakers of Ghana Football as crucial decisions regarding the upcoming GFA elections will be taken today.

Apart from some amendments tabled for congress, one subject that will dominate the deliberations is the proposed filing fee for the GFA presidency. A heated argument is expected from the delegates in that regard because of the astronomical rise of the filing fee for the presidential candidates from GH¢5,000 to GH¢50,000.

The announcement of this new development by the FA a few weeks ago generated a heated debate

among the football family, with some believing that the increase was unreasonable while others think it is a good move to generate revenue for the association.

Whatever it is, the 120 delegates will certainly decide on the matter on the floor of congress today to set the stage for the upcoming GFA elections slated for October this year. Considering the tension and agitation which have characterised today's congress, we strongly believe it would be a dress rehearsal for the GFA Extraordinary Congress in October.

On October 25, 2019, a similar elective congress held at the Physicians and Surgeons auditorium in Accra ushered in the Kurt Okraku administration. That means October this year will be exactly four years in office for the current GFA administration; hence, the ongoing jostling for positions ahead of D-day.

Quite characteristic of every election, some potential candidates have taken off with their campaigns even before the whistle is blown to begin the electoral process. A couple of weeks back, former GFA Vice-President, George Afriyie, jumped the gun to declare his intention to contest for the FA presidency for the second consecutive time after losing narrowly to the incumbent four years ago.

This followed a novelty congress held by over 70 delegates out of the then 120 voters in Kumasi to make some amendments to limit what they perceived to be arbitrary powers of the GFA Executive Council (ExCo). However, though the group insisted that congress was organised within the GFA regulations, the ExCo did not endorse it, let

alone consider the new amendments.

The simmering tension that deadlock generated, coupled with the recent agitation over the congress roadmap, has made today's congress one of the most unpredictable convocations in GFA's history.

But come what may, there must be a consensus on all the critical issues today to pave the way for the release of the much-awaited election roadmap. We, therefore, urge all the delegates to go to today's congress with a cool head to ensure that every decision is taken in the interest of Ghana Football.

Prior to today's congress, Division One side, New Edubiase United, petitioned the FA to, among other things, organise the GFA elections before October to calm nerves and ensure fairness to all the candidates. However, the GFA General Secretary, Prosper Harrison Addo, allayed their fears and explained that an election would be unconstitutional since it would cut short the mandate of a legally-elected administration.

He went on to assure the petitioner that the election roadmap would be released by the Election Committee after congress had decided on the filing fees for the various positions at today's congress.

We wish all the delegates the best of luck in their deliberations today and hope that they will be guided by the FIFA slogan of 'Fair Play' as they take crucial decisions regarding the future of Ghana Football.

Where does De Gea rank in EPL's history?

DAVID de Gea is leaving Manchester United after a productive 12 years - so where does he rank among the Premier League greats?

The Spanish goalkeeper is departing at the end of his contract, with the club not willing to match the £375,000-per-week deal he signed in 2019.

But the 32-year-old leaves on a personal high, having just won his second Premier League Golden Glove for the most clean sheets in a season.

BBC Sport looks at how De Gea compares with some of the other great Premier League keepers.

Trophies

After playing in an underwhelming Manchester United team for so long, De Gea cannot compete with some of his rivals for trophies.

He won one Premier League title, in Sir Alex Ferguson's last season in charge in 2012-13. United legend Peter Schmeichel and current Manchester City keeper Ederson have a record five Premier League winners' medals each.

De Gea also won one FA Cup, two EFL Cups and the Europa League - hauls also overshadowed by Schmeichel and Ederson.

Clean sheets

Only three goalkeepers have ever kept more Premier League clean sheets than De Gea - with former Chelsea and Arsenal man Petr Cech top by far with 202.

Former Liverpool, Aston Villa, West Ham, Manchester City and Portsmouth

keeper David James is second on 169.

Mark Schwarzer, who played for Middlesbrough, Fulham, Chelsea and Leicester, is next on 151, with De Gea on 147.

De Gea's 17 clean sheets last season took him above David Seaman, Nigel Martyn, Pepe Reina, Brad Friedel, Tim Howard and Edwin van der Sar.

For clean sheets at one club, De Gea is second to Cech and his 162 for Chelsea.

Saves

De Gea is ranked third for Premier League saves since Opta started recording that data in 2003-04 - so no comparison can be made with earlier-era goalkeepers.

In those 19 years, former United and current Wrexham keeper Ben Foster tops the way with 1,248 saves - aided by longevity and playing for some of the league's weaker teams like Watford, Birmingham and West Brom.

Finn Jussi Jaaskelainen, who played for Bolton and West Ham, is next on 1,223.

De Gea follows on 1,157 (2.8 saves a game), just above Schwarzer, Cech and current West Ham keeper Lukasz Fabianski.

Since De Gea's United debut, his 72% save ratio in the Premier League is only below Cech, Liverpool's Alisson and Newcastle's ex-Burnley keeper Nick Pope (of players to make 100 or more appearances).

Longevity

De Gea made 415 Premier League appearances, with only six goalkeepers featuring more times in the division.

That is particularly impressive when you consider De Gea played 57 times in La Liga for Atletico Madrid before joining United and, at the age of 32, could have another 200 league appearances ahead of him.

Former England keeper James tops the list on 572 games - and also the list of goals conceded (665) as a result.

Schwarzer follows next on 514 games, and also for goals conceded (653). The Australian has the record for most Premier League appearances of any non-British player.

Republic of Ireland icon Shay Given played 451 times for Blackburn, Newcastle, Manchester City, Aston Villa and Stoke, conceding 607 goals. Brad Friedel, who played for Liverpool, Blackburn, Villa and Tottenham, is next on 450 games (567 goals).

Cech played 443 times - only letting in 366 goals - with Jaaskelainen next on 436 games (613 goals).

De Gea conceded 446 goals in his 415 English top-flight games.

Individual trophies

De Gea won two Premier League Golden Gloves, in 2017-18 and the season just gone. He is one of only six keepers to win it more than once.

Leading the way on four are Cech and Celtic's Joe Hart, who played for Manchester City, Birmingham, West Ham and Burnley.

Ederson and Pepe Reina, who played for Liverpool and Aston Villa, have three, and Alisson has two.

De Gea has a joint record four

Manchester United player of the season awards (2014, 2015, 2016 and 2018), level with Cristiano Ronaldo. Nobody else has more than two.

Anything else?

Since De Gea's Manchester United debut, he conceded 426 - but the expected goals from those shots totalled 467, meaning he effectively denied an extra 41 goals.

Only Tottenham's Hugo Lloris denied more in that time, 48 (380 goals from 428 expected goals).

In that time, De Gea ranks sixth for errors leading to goals with 17. Asmir Begovic is top with 25, followed by Lloris' 24.

How does he compare with other United keepers?

United's top three goalkeepers in the Premier League era are widely considered to be Denmark's Schmeichel and the Netherlands' Van der Sar - who each won a Champions League for the club - plus De Gea.

Schmeichel won five Premier League titles to Van der Sar's four and De Gea's one.

De Gea, with 147, beat the pair for clean sheets, though. Van der Sar kept 132 and Schmeichel had 128 - both including for other clubs.

With De Gea and defender Phil Jones leaving the club this summer, no players left at United have played under legendary manager Ferguson or won the title with the club.

— BBC