



• Coach
Martinus
Koopman



**Kudus
on fire
for West
Ham**

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• Emmanuel Newton Dasoberi
— CAF Stadium Inspector

**Experts
needed
to manage
national
stadiums**
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Despite poor start...

Hearts keep faith with Koopman

Story: Peter Sarbah

ACCRA Hearts of Oak's leadership continues to place its unwavering trust in coach Martinus Koopman, even in the face of challenging early-season results and calls by a section of their fans for him to be sacked.

The team's initial struggles had prompted calls from some fans for the

return of Coach Samuel Boadu, who had previously guided Hearts to a Premier League and FA Cup double three seasons ago before his departure during the 2021/22 season.

However, recent weeks have seen a transformation in the team's fortunes, offering the club's management a

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Voice of

Graphic SPORTS

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Ghana's stadium and sports facility management need new approach

Ghana's commitment to developing its sports infrastructure is undeniable, with the construction of multi-purpose sports facilities and the upgrading of existing stadiums. These investments are critical for youth development and the growth of sports in the country.

However, recent events have cast doubts on the effectiveness of these efforts, highlighting the urgent need for reform in stadium and sports facility management in Ghana.

A recent decision by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) to ban the Cape Coast Stadium from hosting international football serves as a stark reminder of the pressing issues that plague our stadium management. CAF's Technical Development Director, Raul Chipenda, pointed out numerous concerns, including functionality, design, comfort, and equipment quality, that render these stadiums non-compliant with FIFA/CAF standards. These issues are not isolated incidents, as similar concerns were raised about

the Baba Yara Stadium in Kumasi just a year earlier. The response to these critical issues demands immediate and resolute action. The responsibility for stadium management in Ghana falls under the National Sports Authority (NSA), and it's clear that the status quo is no longer tenable. The NSA has often adopted a defensive stance against CAF's directives, neglecting crucial details such as player comfort, media areas, and restroom quality in stadium management. This neglect could result in Ghana being banned or blacklisted from hosting major international competitions.

Stadium management goes beyond maintaining a well-kept playing field. Regulatory bodies scrutinise finer details, including facilities for officials, media working areas, and basic amenities. These aspects have been consistently overlooked by the managers of state-owned stadiums.

It is vital for the Ghana government to invest in reforms that ensure profitability, good maintenance culture, and compliance with local and international standards in stadium management. The government should consider engaging private sector expertise to help the NSA effectively manage state stadiums under its control. This approach aligns with global best practices and has the potential to turn these facilities into profitable investments.

The importance of private sector involvement is exemplified by various countries that have successfully managed their sports facilities. Private firms bring expertise, efficiency, and a profit-driven mindset to the table. Their involvement can ensure

that these stadiums are well-maintained, adhere to compliance standards, and generate revenue for the government. This approach not only benefits the facilities but also the local communities and sports enthusiasts. As Ghana prepares to host the 2023 African Games, these reforms are of utmost importance. Neglecting this crucial aspect of sports infrastructure management could lead to wasteful investments and render these facilities as white elephants in the years to come. The government must revisit its existing management systems and be open to collaboration with the private sector to ensure the success of these investments and safeguard the future of Ghana's sports infrastructure.

The Graphic Sports believes that Ghana's sports infrastructure development is a commendable endeavour, but it must be accompanied by effective management to ensure profitability, good maintenance culture, and compliance with local and international standards.

Recent bans on hosting international matches due to stadium deficiencies are a wake-up call. It is time for Ghana to embrace reform and consider private sector involvement in stadium management to unlock the full potential of these investments and elevate the nation's standing in the world of sports.

The time for action is now.

Why community engagement good for our clubs

By Benjamin Willie Graham

THE buzz and excitement that greet the start of every football season clearly define the love football enthusiasts have for both their clubs and their communities.

Clubs that are established and based in football-loving communities do enjoy the best of support one can only imagine, but the big question is, how are they involved in the success stories of these clubs?

Just take a cursory look at the names of our clubs – Tano Bofuakwa, Accra Great Olympics, Kumasi Asante Kotoko, Agbozome United, Bechem United, Real Tamale United, Sekondi Eleven Wise, Sekondi Hasaacas, Berekum Chelsea, Aduana Stars, Cape Coast Ebusua Dwarfs, Bibiani GoldStars, among others, enjoy some support from their communities by virtue of their geographical locations.

Community engagement should be a crucial activity for our football clubs as it plays a significant role in their overall success and sustainability. It allows clubs to establish a strong bond with their local communities, creating a sense of belonging and pride among the people. Indeed, community engagement helps in attracting and retaining fans,

sponsors, and investors, contributing to the financial stability and growth of the clubs.

As a football Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) advocate, I strongly believe that if our clubs take time to study the importance of simple things such as community engagements, they will realise that it enables football clubs to build a loyal, dedicated fan base.

By actively involving in community initiatives, clubs can develop a positive image and reputation among the locals. This, in turn, fosters a sense of identification and loyalty, leading to increased attendance at matches and higher fan participation. Engaging the community also offers opportunities to expand the clubs' fan base, which creates a larger support network and potential source of revenue.

Moreover, community engagement as I know and being practised meticulously by successful clubs in South Africa such as Mamelodi Sundowns, Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates all have led to positive outcomes in their communities with notable CSR programmes in supporting women and children, health care, thus improving the livelihoods.

I am convinced to the core that these community engagements if planned and executed well with support from club sponsors will serve as a platform for our clubs to



• Accra Great Olympics and WaterAid conducted COVID-19 outreach at Korle Gonno as part of the club's community engagement.

prioritise social responsibility and give back to society.

By investing in various community development projects such as youth football programmes, educational initiatives and health campaigns, clubs can make a positive impact and contribute to the well-being of the community within which they operate. This not only enhances the clubs' reputation but also helps in improving the overall social and economic conditions in the locality.

Additionally, community engagement plays a pivotal role in attracting corporate sponsors. Sponsors are increasingly looking for partnerships that align with their values and enable them to actively contribute to the community. By displaying their commitment to community

development and involvement, clubs can position themselves as attractive partners for corporate sponsors. These sponsors, in turn, can provide financial support and resources that are crucial for the clubs' growth and success.

Furthermore, community engagement provides clubs with opportunities for increased income. Through partnerships with local businesses and community events, clubs can generate additional income through advertising, ticket sales and merchandise. By actively participating in and organising community activities, clubs can also create platforms for fan engagement and interaction, leading to increased brand loyalty and revenue generation.

If our clubs decide to take care of their communities in existence,

the communities will reciprocate by taking care of the clubs. Therefore, community engagement plays a vital role in the success and sustainability of football clubs. For instance, it allows clubs to build strong relationships with their local communities, attract and retain fans, sponsors, and investors, and contribute to the overall development of society.

By effectively engaging with the community, clubs can expand their fan base, enhance their reputation, and secure valuable partnerships. Without any shred of doubt, it is imperative for our clubs to prioritise community engagement as a key component of their overall strategy.