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Despite name calling Jose Peseiro to lead eagles in AFCON



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Leicester City L'll Be Back In The Epl In The Next Season –Mr Anowi Nnamd



CAF License Courses Set To Return In Nigeria –Boss

Igoche Mark Seeks Collaboration,Unity Amongst Basketball Stakeholders in 2024



Behold! Where Super Eagles Will camp During AFCON



Ibrahim Musa Gusau Visits Anambra State, Becomes The First Sitting NFF President To Officially Visit The State

It was Joy and Merry in Anambra as the highest football administrator in the country visits South East, Anambra precisely.

The President visited the State in honor of Professor Poly Emenike (Odenigbo Nanka) CEO Nero's Pharmaceuticals, to mark his 40th Year of Sponsoring the Nanka Champions league.

The President landed at the Chinua Achebe international airport Umueri on Sunday 31st December 2023 and was received by the Anambra State Football Association Chairman General Chikelue Iloenyosi and his members. They all exchanged pleasantries and left for their Hotel

On Monday 1st January 2024

At the lobby of Bon Hotel Awka, NFF President Ibrahim Gusau recieved a Rangers International F.C of Enugu Insignia from the General Manager, Amobi Ezeaku . After that,he had some chats with the football stakeholders, after that,

Ibrahim Gusau visited the home of the CEO of Nero's Pharmaceuticals Prof Poly Emenike Odenigbo Nanka alongside General Chikelue Iloenyosi, Anambra FA Chairman, Managing director of Rangers International Barr Amobi Ezeaku, SWAN vice president south east, Frankie Omogua, Ndema Obinna Phamouzdj (media), Ralph Nweke, Anambra FA Secretary, Myckie Chukwuebuka (Media) and host of others

The President relinquished how he met with Poly Emenike and how it has been so far, he also Urged Poly not to relent in supporting football in Anambra State and Nigeria. Poly Emenike assured him that he is driven by Passion, he said that when he was in Vietnam,he Identified as a Nigerian and locals asked if he is a brother to Kanu, Babayaro, etc and he said Yes, he asked the locals if they know any Nigerian President, they said No, since then he knew the value of football

Poly Emenike also said he never regrets sponsoring football and building a stadium at a former Errosion site, he said many have passed through the programs, Players like Simy Nwankwo etc and he is thankful and will continue to support football in any way he can

The NFF President then went to the Nero's Stadium Nanka for the finals of the Nanka Champions league.

It was a game between Nkpor Branch vs Umuahia Branch

The President had the kick off with The Sponsor Poly Emenike

He then Urged the players to be disciplined and play safe, he also motivated the Referees to start young so as to achieve a lot

The President Ibrahim Gusau and his entourage later moved to another town in Anambra, Aguluzigbo as they are also playing the finals of Dynamic youth tourney.

The President promised the people that adequate preparations will be made for the Super Eagles ahead of the AFCON in Cote D'Ivoire this January, he also promised to do anything possible to develop football from the grassroot.

The President then headed to another town Igbo Ukwu as they are also playing the finals of the village competition, he praised their passion and commitment towards the Sports and related to them how football can unite people, he said football can bring people together without paying or forcing them to attend, he reminded the Member representing Aguata in the house of representatives how difficult it is for them to gather crowd for political gatherings.

He thanked everyone,

Igbo Ukwu community presented an Award to the NFF President Ibrahim Musa Gusau for his flamboyant performance so far, they also presented an Award to Anambra FA Chairman, Football General Chikelue Iloenyosi for an outstanding performance so far.

It was a memorable visit to the State and the People of Anambra State appreciate the visit











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Igoche Mark Seeks Collaboration,Unity Amongst Basketball Stakeholders in 2024

JLN : REPORTER ABJ



The Initiator of Mark D' Ball Basketball Championship, Mr.Igoche Mark has urged basketball stakeholders to embrace 2024 with a renewed hope and face the the year with an unwavering determination.

Mark's admonition was contained in his new year message issued on Sunday in Abuja.

The message reads, "As we bid farewell to an eventful year and step into a new chapter, but let us embrace the new year with renewed hope and unwavering determination.

As members of this incredible basketball family, we have faced our fair share of hurdles, disappointments, and setbacks. But remember, it is during these trying times that our true strength lies. It is through the darkest of nights that the brightest stars emerge.

So, let us unite our hearts and minds as we eagerly embrace the promises that 2024 holds for us. Close your eyes for a moment, and visualize a future where we stand tall as a force to be reckoned with on the international basketball stage. The time has come to cast aside the shadows of the past and embark on a journey towards a brighter tomorrow.

Dare to dream, dear basketball family, for dreams can weave miracles into reality. Together, let us forge ahead into the new year, armed with indomitable spirit, unwavering dedication, and an unbreakable bond that defines our basketball family. Let us support one another, applaud each other's achievements, and lend a helping hand when someone stumbles." He stated.

Mark who reaffirmed his commitment towards the development of basketball,says the new year signals a new dawn to a positive turning point for the game.

"In this new year, let us reaffirm our commitment to the sport we love with every beat of our hearts. Let us nurture the young talents that lie in wait, providing them with guidance, encouragement, and the platform to shine.Believe in the power of our basketball family, dear friends. Believe that we have what it takes to soar to new heights, to defy all odds, and to emerge victorious.

Together, let us raise our heads high, brush off the dust of the past, and embrace the future with open arms. For 2024 promises to be the dawn of a new era, a chapter where our basketball legacy shall flourish like never before.

Wishing you all a year brimming with hope, growth, and joy. May the courts be our canvas, and may the game forever unite us".Mark's new year message concludes.

CAF License Courses Set To Return In Nigeria –Boss



JLN : Reporter Abj

The Confederation of Africa Football, CAF, License coaching courses are due to return to Nigeria before the end of first quarter of 2024.

This was made known by the President of Nigeria Football Coaches Association , Dr Ladan Bosso while speaking in a telephone chat.

Bosso said that the NFF under the leadership of Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau along with the Secretary , Dr Muhammed Sanusi have put arrangements in top gear to have the course hold in Nigeria next year.

The former U20 AFCON winning Coach said the NFF knows the plight of Nigerian coaches and has put the Technical department on their toes to have the courses hold next year.

"Let me assure you that the leadership of the Nigeria Football Federation, Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau and General Secretary, Dr Muhammed Sanusi understand the feelings of Nigeria Coaches. Even, as I speak to you the General Secretary has attended some course and seminars with our members , so he knows the feelings and plight of Nigerian coaches."

The former Abia Warriors handler added that: "I think the policy of CAF has been the issue affecting the program to hold in Nigeria as it does not want foreign coaches to train other coaches. CAF wants the coaches from the same country to train their coaches as they understand the Football culture of the land better than the foreigners.". The number one coach in modern day Nigeria revealed.

Former Bayelsa United coach said that: "The NFF has always been on the neck of the Technical department to project our members for CAF Courses. I think it has been year 2017 we had the course held in Nigeria last and this has affected our members.CAF said we must have our footballing culture subsists and such our coaches must be the one to tutor us the courses . I can tell you for free on this platform and of course the entire nation that Austin Eguavoen has done a good job to get at least 15 qualified trainers to handle the courses next year as I am privileged to see the course contents designed by the Technical Department . Let's just wait for CAF to give express approval to commence the program and I think it should hold before the end of first quarter."The National U. 20 tactician concluded.

JNCCL-JLN 2024

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Season Greetings



With a successful Christmas celebration, we also wish to usher our esteem readership into a year of prospects and a dream come through in every endeavour.

Amb Fanny Ikhayere Amun MON
Founder

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Boboye Bows Out Of Heartland FC As Technical Adviser

Kennedy Boboye durig the week bowed out of Heartland FC as Technical Adviser after the team triumphed over League leaders Remo Stars by three goals to one in Week 16 NPFL encounter.

It would be recalled that the Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodinma has ordered the immediate return of former International Christian Obi as the Technical Adviser of the team.

Obi was relieved of his appointment after leading the to a winless five matches in the current league season.

Since assumption of duties, Kennedy Boboye has taken the Naze Millionaires from the red lines.

"I want to tell you, since I started coaching, this is the first club that I have gotten the best maximum support. They have been there for me, but it's very unfortunate that I will not be there again with them after today's match. I wish them well " the former Sharks FC bully striker said in tears.



NPFL Review !!!!



The last games of 2023 /2024 in one of the best league in the World, The Nigeria Premier Football league has been played and So far So good, We've seen thrilling, Spectacular, Entertaining games as no teams are pushovers.

Few Away Wins, and Draws, Hitch Free Games, one can say that there is a lot of improvement in the league.

Some Stadiums were sold out for some games, some are still struggling to attract fans, some teams have already received sanctions from the disciplinary committee for misconduct and inability to control their raging fans.

Some Coaches have been Sacked, Some left the club, and was later reinstated generally it has been eventful.

Remo Stars are sitting on top of the log uncomfortably with 29 Points same with Lobi Stars (29) on second with a lesser goal difference (4) to Remo's (9). Doma United are not far behind as they sit on Third with 28 Points with a better Goal difference than Lobi Stars (5)

Enyimba are on 26 points with two outstanding games .

With these one can feel the intensity of the competition brewing on the top of the NPFL table

At the bottom Bayelsa United are leading from the rear as they can only get 14 points in 16 games, too bad for a team that has a high scoring striker , who won accolades as the Best NPFL player of 2023, with 19 goals to his name Robert Mizo

Coach Fatai Osho left Akwa United Football Club, Uyo because they couldn't win games, his departure didn't change a lot as Akwa United are sitting on the 19th Position with just 15 Points in 16 games

Niger Tonardoes are not having a good season as Coach Hamza 's side are finding it difficult to win even home games , they have only managed to win four games out of 16 so far this Season . They sit on 18th position with 16 points

On the 17th position is Heartland fc of Owerri.

Coach Christian Obi was demoted to the feeder team after about 9games without a win for the Naze Millionaires, he was replaced by Coach Boboye who brought a new life to heartland have already won 2 Games with an Away Draw, but for reasons Best known to Imo State government, they're bringing Coach Obi back, which might affect Heartland in the coming games, they are now 17th On the log with 16 Points Same With the Pride of Rivers who are sitting on 16th Position with 16 points but have only played 11 games due to Continental Engagements, their last game was a home draw against Bendel Insurance FC , The Stanley Eguma side are not having an excellent season, Same goes to Sporting Lagos who stormed the league with a bang from the NNL with enough packages, but they couldn't keep up as they are now sitting on the 15th position with just 17 points in 15 games .

Shooting Stars and Gombe United are on 13 & 14th position respectively with 19 points each.

Though Shooting stars Coach is promising an improved performance, Gombe United have been inconsistent, Sadly losing to City Rivals Doma United Fc. Gombe at home and other woeful results we can say the team needs redemption . Kwara United are also on 19 Points with -1 goal difference, they've been struggling this season but losing at home is what they don't do

Rangers International F.C of Enugu , Sunshine Stars of Akure and Katsina United have 22, 21, 20 Points Respectively

Rangers returned to the Cathedral after two years and won against Shooting Stars, Coach Fidelis Ilechukwu is building a formidable team in Enugu

Sunshine Stars of Akure still mourning their Assistant Kits Man who lost his life as hoodlums attacked their team bus on their way to Umuahia still Won at home against Doma in their last game of 2023

Plateau United, Kano Pillars, Bendel Insurance and Abia Warriors are sitting 5th to 8th position on the table piling up pressure on the top four teams

So far So good the league have been interesting as fans can watch games live on their phones and some still attend games live, I think the organizers should add more grease to there elbows in projecting the league.

The Officiating is still below average but there are improvements and more improvement are needed

The players should be motivated to avoid the movement of players from the league to foreign countries, like inviting at least 5 players to the National teams and working on the improvement of players welfare, that will add value to the league to build broader followership, (Saudi league is an example)

We will get there one day

Despite The Name Calling Jose Peseiro Has Come To Stay

Nothing that has a bigining tbat has no end same in the tragic engagement of the super eagles coach ahead of the AFCON crucial games in Ivory coast with an uphill task to prosecute the 2024 AFCON finals with the available players as per the official provisional list from the Nigeria football federation NFF. The criticism is not a Nigeria thing but a global trend for teams followership to scrutinise team selecrions and always express their opinion with venor as if the know better than such a coach that has been assigned to take responsibility.

If the truth must be said the various opinion expressed was normal and it is a global trend in the recruitment of coaches , players, achieving final list , out comr of matches , team perfomances and treat to qualifications of all sort. At a time that opinion has been expressed all misciles should come down and add value to team preparation positively and allow history to judge itself.

Mr Jose Peseiro is presently a Nigerian by hos allegiance leadinf a Nigerin team in Afcon and the committment of the players should never be in doubt to play out tgeir mind for the common Nigerian course in AFCON. A word is enough for the wise. GOOD TO OUR DARLING EAGLES IN THEIR PREPARATION IN 2024 AFCON FINALS GOD WILLING.

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Leicester City L'll Be Back In The EPL In The Next Season Mr Anowi Nnamd



The EPL remain a league model that is used to justify football games if one considers the value in patronage despite the known facts the EPL remain the best and most expensive league in the world but it is relative considering the diverse views of not technically rated over other leagues globally.

Back home in Nigeria the support base to the choice over other leagues is over whelming that the much plans to generate support for the local league in Nigeria has failed in a professional league administered by the Nigeria Professional Football League management NPFL. Ironically football fans will on hand mention the full names of players and managers of other leagues with dates of home and away games perfectly without an error. The reverse is the case that events of the local leagues can't be remembered talk less of having any relevant information like that of the foreign leagues.

Rome they said was not built in a day since there is a cordial relationship between the Nigeria Football Federation and their major affiliate league the Nigeria Professional football league which was lacking in the past eight years with consistent interferences as alleged. The present President of the Nigeria football federation under the leadership of Alh Ibrahim Musa Gusau has shown leadership qualities that has restricted the present federation to strictly formulate policies, regulate, oversite and add corporate value timely. Same can be said of the sports ministry that has been supportive with government supports including their primary roles.

FIFA preaches fair play that games are not won, draw or lost until the matches take place but here we read the conversation of a diehard fans of Leicester city back home in Nigeria is so sure that his darling team will gain promotion at the end of the 2023/2024 football season when his team is presently in League 1 of the EPL next lower league. Find the interesting level of confidence of our guest MR ANOWI NNAMDI the land lord of the NLNG production as the 2023/2024 season get tougher.

WHAT WAS THE LEADERSHIP LEASON IN THE RELEGATION OF LEICISTER CITY:

As a company, NLNG makes effort to develop leaders to achieve business success? And success is achieved in all endeavours in the world. Leicester City, from a humble beginning and against all odds, surprised the football world. So my Colleagues and I thought that there are leadership lessons we could learn from the club and rightly so. This is what informed the assembly of the star-studded analysts to x-ray the "leadership lessons from the compelling story of Leicester City Football Club" as a special edition of our company's "Leaders Developing Leaders - LDL" programme series.

AT WHAT POINT DID YOU SAW IT COMING:

Yes I saw it coming. The club had some technical and other challenges, which needed to be resolved as the season was in progress. These challenges did not allow for focus and concentration. For instance, the club acquired some new players, changed tactics in the middle of the season, changed leaderships, etc, but did not have enough time for the team to blend and adjust. But all that is behind us now. As you can notice, the club is performing very well in the Championship.

BUT NOST OF YOUR PLAYERS STAYED BACK DESPITE LECRATIVE OFFRS:

Indeed, they did. Leicester City is a great club and has a strong followership, especially in the Midlands. I am not surprised by a good number of players' decision to stay back/on. They were confident to bounce back.

ANY HOPE TO BOUNSE BACK SOON?

That is football for you. No one can be certain until the last whistle. We will keep striving and keep the momentum on.

WHAT IS THE TEAM DOING DIFFERENTLY NOW:

Quite a lot of lessons will be learnt. Resilience, tenacity and teamwork are obvious ones, but it will be good to wait until the end of the season, and the club is promoted. That way, we can have the complete story of lessons learnt.

AFTER YOUR PRIMARY JOB AS MANAGER PRODUCTION NLNG LEICISTER CITY IS ALL OVER YOU SO.

It has not been easy. So many negative comments from family, friends and colleagues. But the fact that I am not a supporter of the club because the club wins all the time, but the fact that I love Leicester City. So I close my ears to the criticism and focus on enjoying the games and the individual player's performance and growth. Like it is said, "love is blind".

ARE THE PROBLEMS INDENTIFIED?

Obviously there will be. The club has a few departments that we will have to strengthen. The EPL is tougher than the Championship and every club needs to be prepared for the challenges. But it is still early days. Let's focus on the promotion to EPL, one game at a time.

RETURNING BACK TO THE EPL WILL NOT BE A CHILDS PLAY FOR YOUR TEAM

It's a combination of all manner of challenges, including coaching, finance, management, compliance, player's motivation, etc. But we have put all these past us now, and forging forward.

WHAT WILL BE YOUR AREA OF STRENGHT AS THE TEAM IS GUNNING FOR PROMOTION

A couple of things have changed. Obvious amongst them is the Coaching Crew and Players belief in themselves and team work. But more of these changes is better left to be discussed at the end of an expected successful season of promotion to the EPL.

WHAT PLANS IS ON THE TABLE TO CONSOLIDATE THE LAST PROGRAMME THAT HOSTED THE CREAM OF FOOTBALL ANALYST AT THE RA EVENT CENTRE AT THE NLNG

Yes there is. Depending on what happens at the end of the 2023/2024 season, Leicester City may even be in consideration for this conversation earlier, just to learn from how the club navigated the Championship. But I would not want to pre-empt what the NLNG LDL team and NLNG FC is thinking. I say this because there may be other clubs that may present more interesting Leadership Lessons at the end of this season.

CAN LEICISTER CITY RETURN WITH A BANG IN THE NEAREST FUTURE.

Certainly. There is every chance that this will be the direction. By and large, the club has the ambition of lifting the EPL trophy again, in the nearest future.

ANY POSSIBLE RECRUITMENT IF PROMOTION WAS POSSIBLE

The club is looking out for Coaches. However, I cannot say for sure that a new coach will be hired when we are promoted to the Premier Division. Coaches grow and need to be given opportunity. We are watching the performance of the present coach, and it is still early days to make this prediction.

WHAT HAS INFORMED YOUR STRONG ATTACHMENT TO A TEAM THAT HAS BEEN RELEGATED WHEN BETTER OPTIONS STILL AVAILABLE IN THE EPL

Like I said earlier, I love Leicester City FC. I love the aura of the club. I love the leadership. I love the players. I love the way we play the game. This has also influenced the way I now play the game. My personal game has improved because I play the Leicester City way. In NLNG World Class FC (my local football club), it has been difficult for our local coach to find a No. 3 to replace me because of the way i approach the game. I am very proud of Leicester City FC and I will always be proud of the club, irrespective of what division the club ends up every season. I am a die-hard fan of Leicester City.

STAKE YOUR PRICE TO RENOUNCE LEICISTER CITY

There is no chance to renounce Leicester City. My support for the club is as solid as the "rock of jibrata". There is no better or more stable club than Leicester City FC, and I want to reaffirm my support for the club.

WHAT HAS THE CHALANGES LIKE WITH FRIENDS AND AMONGS FRIENDS

As far as I know, my family and I are the only Leicester City fans/supporters in NLNG, Nigeria and possibly in Africa. I have not come across anyone else. We live Leicester City. We visited the club in the summer of 2023 to buy the normal season original jerseys and souvenirs.



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SERVICE OF SONGS

Date: Thursday, 1st February, 2024 **Time:** 4:00pm
Venue: The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Glory Tabernacle Parish, 98 Upper Lawani Street, Benin City, Edo State.

INTERMENT

Date: Saturday , 3rd February, 2024 **Time:** 11:00am
Venue: Ikiewalen Quarters, Opoji, Esan-West LGA, Edo State.

RECEPTION, TRIBUTE & EULOGIES

Date: Sunday, 4th February, 2024 **Time:** 2pm
Venue: Uyi Grand Marquee, 10 Aideyan Crescent, off Adesuwa Road, Benin City, Edo State.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Date: Sunday, 4th February, 2024 **Time:** 9am
Venue: The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Glory Tabernacle Parish, 98 Upper Lawani Street, Benin City, Edo State.

RSVP

Mrs. Sarah Okojie - 08036678477 **Mr. Azeta Omoaghe** - 07067167378

FORMER FIRST LADY
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Dr. (Mrs) Maryam Sani Abacha

Date:.....

.....

.....

NOTIFICATION/INVITATION OF MARRIAGE CEREMONY

It is with great pleasure that I formally write to notify you of the forthcoming Wedding of our Son **Alhaji Mustapha Sani Abacha** and his bride to be princess **Safa Tijjani Saleh Gaidam**.

The Marriage Ceremony will take place insha Allah in December, 2023 and January, 2024.

1. **Wedding Fatiha - 23rd December, 2023**
   Venue: Masjid No. 7 Cementry Road Old GRA Maiduguri
   Time: 1Pm
2. **Special Dinner/Date: 5th January, 2024**
   Venue: International Conference Centre, Abuja
   Time: 7:30pm Prompt

The family of late General Sani Abacha (G.C.F.R) will be honoured to have you grace this occasion with your presence.

A final Nikah invitation card is on its way to you but this letter of notification equally serves as a formal invitation.

The entire family would be delighted if you can find the time to personally come and share with us the joy of the day.

We look forward to your presence at the event.

I wish you and your family the compliments of the season.

Sincerely,

Dr. (Mrs) Maryam Sani Abacha
Former First Lady of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria.

08034330229, 08020636018
Gidado Road, G.R.A. Kano State

Behold! Where Super Eagles Will camp During AFCON





When the Super Eagles arrive Abidjan on Wednesday 10 January for their 20th adventure at the Africa Cup of Nations, they will be lodged at the Pullman Hotel which they will share with the Black Stars of Ghana.

The hotel on Abidjan Plateau is located at Rue Abdoulaye Fadiga. It has a lagoon view.

It offers a spa, fit lounge and pool bar. A buffet breakfast is served each morning at Pullman Abidjan.

Guests can enjoy local and international dishes at the onsite restaurant. A range of drinks is provided at the bar.

The Super Eagles are aiming for their fourth title even though they had played the title matches on four other instances losing to Cameroon in 1984, 1988 and 2000 as well as Algeria in 1990.

Thus, they had played the final matches on seven occasions including the three times they won in 1980, 1994 and 2013.

Nigeria's Soft Underbelly Exposed Ahead Of AFCON

AFCONNigeria's soft underbelly exposed ahead of AFCONPublished 2 days ago on December 31, 2023 3:28pmBy Kunle Solaja

There are worrying signs for Jose Peseiro and his band of Super Eagles looking to claim a fourth Africa Cup of Nations title — after Nigeria Football Federation had announced that ambitious objective in a national campaign with the tag line "Let's Do It Again".

Months ago, the Super Eagles drew 2-2 with Saudi Arabia, when the goals conceded both resulted from goalkeeping mistakes, and one is left to ask how much longer the team can afford errors in the defensive third.

"Let's Do It Again", according to an NFF statement, was adopted before the 6-0 deconstruction of São Tomé e Principe in the last game of Nigeria's 2023 AFCON qualifying campaign.

The players all wore T-shirts with the inscription in their warm ups ahead of the fixtures vs. Saudi Arabia and Mozambique, and the team's social media handles have used it as a hashtag.

This is a SMART goal for a team like Nigeria, not only because they have won the continental trophy three times — in 1980, 1994 and 2013 — but also because they possess some of Africa's most fearsome attacking talent in Victor Osimhen, Victor Boniface, Taiwo Awoniyi, Moffi, Gift Orban, and others.

Having that firepower is only part of the equation, however; supplying the ammunition is another, and keeping the rearguard safe and secure is a different conversation entirely. At the end of this international break, it is clear that, for all the talent the Super Eagles have, the holes in the team bear comparison with Challenger Deep.

Let's start with the obvious.

Since Vincent Enyeama's departure, and the short-lived tenure of Carl Ikeme, Nigeria have struggled to find a goalkeeper to fill his shoes.

To illustrate the extent of the problem, Nigeria selected just three major goalkeepers between 2002, when Enyeama made his debut, and 2015, when he was unceremoniously forced to retire; Austin Ejide and Dele Aiyenugba were the other goalkeepers with significant playing minutes in that 13-year span.

Enyeama was the undisputed first choice, and he kept goal the majority of the time. Ejide was the clear deputy, except for a short time during the 2008 Nations Cup, when Enyeama fell out with then coach Berti Vogts for non-football reasons and was relegated to third choice, with Aiyenugba promoted.

In the past eight years however, Nigeria have fielded Ikeme, Ikechukwu Ezenwa, Daniel Akpeyi, Dele Alampasu, Uzoho, Dele Ajiboye, Maduka Okoye and Adebayo Adeleye in goal.

Where the Super Eagles had essentially one goalkeeper for 13 years, they now average one every year. Still the problems persist. Uzoho's mistake during 2021 AFCON qualifying saw him lose the spot to Okoye, who then proceeded to make the howler that saw highly fancied Nigeria eliminated by Tunisia in the quarterfinals of the tournament.

Uzoho was reinstated, only to make the error that cost Nigeria the World Cup ticket against rivals Ghana.

Reinstated again after a brief interlude when Adeleye was selected, Uzoho returned for the AFCON qualifiers and these friendlies, and all hell broke loose. Of the four goals conceded by the Super Eagles in the friendlies, three resulted from Uzoho's mistakes. A particularly egregious mistake resulted in the opening goal by Saudi Arabia, as he redirected a routine free kick into his own net.

He conceded the other goal by Saudi from another weak free kick; that took a slight deflection but still it could have been saved.

Former defender Mobi Oparaku, who won Olympic gold with Nigeria and played at the 1998 World Cup, said the Super Eagles could not win the Nations Cup with Uzoho in goal

"You can't rely on a goalkeeper who makes basic errors to win a tournament like the AFCON," Oparaku told OwnGoalNigeria.

"Uzoho hasn't improved from 2018 when he made his debut. Goalkeepers get better with more games and exposure but his case is different. He is regressing… with him in goal, it will be hard if not impossible for Nigeria to win the AFCON next year."

Peseiro's first act after taking up as Nigeria coach in 2022 was to defend Uzoho's World Cup qualifying mistake, and he was forced to back his goalkeepers again after a torrent of backlash following the game against Saudi Arabia.

"When I arrived here, I remember I was told to change the goalkeeper," Peseiro said in his post-match remarks.

"I spoke with all of [the goalkeepers], and no one feels comfortable because everybody attacks them.

"I like our players. When they make mistakes, it is my responsibility. The goalkeepers never play freely or calmly because of the people. I don't know why they attack the goalkeepers every time.

"Why don't they attack the strikers when they lose the ball or miss a goal, why? They could make mistakes. It is my responsibility. Next time, I need to train him better."

That training either did not happen, was not enough, or just did effect improvement against Mozambique, and the nerves that Peseiro detailed were on display as Uzoho conceded two more avoidable goals.

It is hard to see Uzoho getting another opportunity, but the alternatives, barely three months ahead of the tournament, are bottom-of-the-barrel thin.

Okoye has not kept goal at all this season, since joining Udinese from Watford, where he endured a similar fate, and his confidence appears even more shot than Uzoho's.

Adebayo appears to be the only other option. And he has his limitations, playing in Israel where he has let in nine goals and failed to keep a clean sheet in five appearances for Hapoel Jerusalem; additionally, he has made only one international appearance.

Goalkeeping is clearly Nigeria's soft underbelly, one that opponents will look to exploit.

But that is not all.

Peseiro still has not found a settled centre-back partnership, and he started two combinations in the latest internationals. Jordan Torunarigha made his debut against Mozambique and looked like he could be a good prospect in future partnership with Calvin Bassey, but that is not exactly world class.

Nigeria's defending of free kicks, and even delivery of their own set pieces, had Peseiro vey unhappy after the game against Mozambique, who scored their second goal after having a player sent off.

"We played better than this team," he said in his post-match remarks. "But our players were thinking it was easy playing against 10. Our corners, nothing. We didn't win one ball in the corner kicks. My players need to understand, I am not happy with this result."

Nigeria scored five goals in two games, but Peseiro was also unhappy about their inability to convert the majority of their opportunities.

"I think we deserved much more. We cannot allow this team with 10 [players] to score. Our team is better than this team. We managed the ball well but we need concentration for good finishing, for good passes, good crosses. I didnt like that. Today, we could have scored three, five, seven, eight goals. We created many opportunities."

The good news is that Nigeria have quality and depth among their full backs: Bright Osayi-Samuel continues to be a gem at right back, and Bruno Onyemaechi performed well in the friendlies.

Further cause for joy for Peseiro can be found in midfield, where Wilfred Ndidi and Alex Iwobi give reason for optimism: Ndidi has been encouraged to explore his offensive talents at Leicester City this season, while Iwobi has had his defensive edges honed at Everton; combined, their new skills make them a much tougher and effective proposition. The addition of Onyeka's steel and long-range shooting, with back up from Joe Aribo and Raphael Onyedika, should be music to Peseiro's ears.

Nigeria's five goals in this international break, added to the six they put past São Tomé e Principe, proves the Super Eagles firepower, and opponents in Cote d'Ivoire next year will do well to be wary of them.

Boniface was the clear revelation of this international break. His power, strength and excellent foot skills place him as a highly effective counterfoil to Osimhen, and exactly the kind of striker defenders hate to face.

But in the end, as the saying goes, attack wins games but defense wins championships; and Nigeria's defence is far from being championship quality at this time.

The silver lining is that they have a little more time to work on it; the dark cloud is that even that may not be quite enough.

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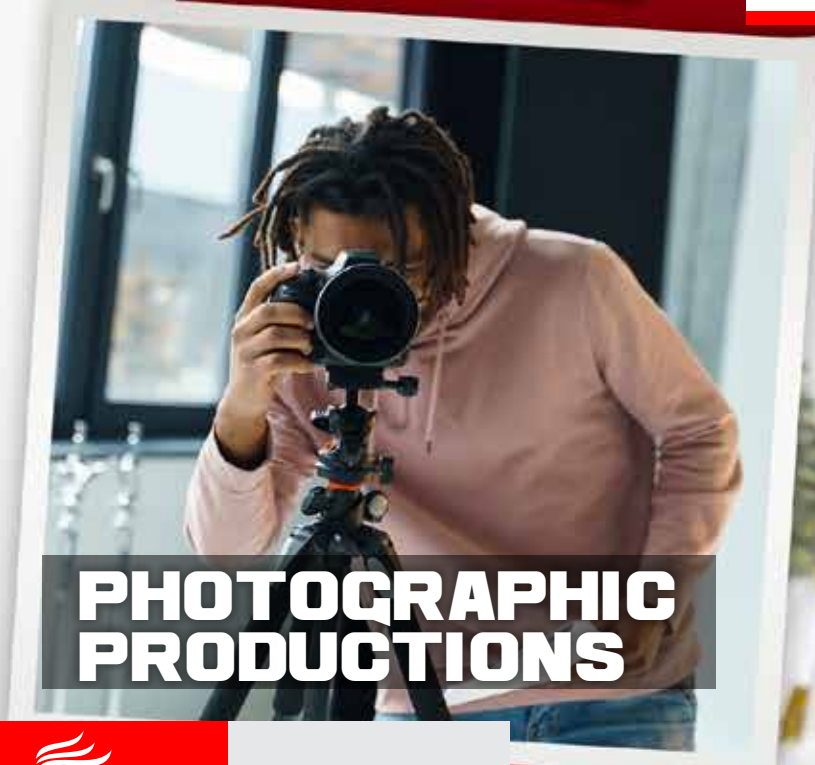


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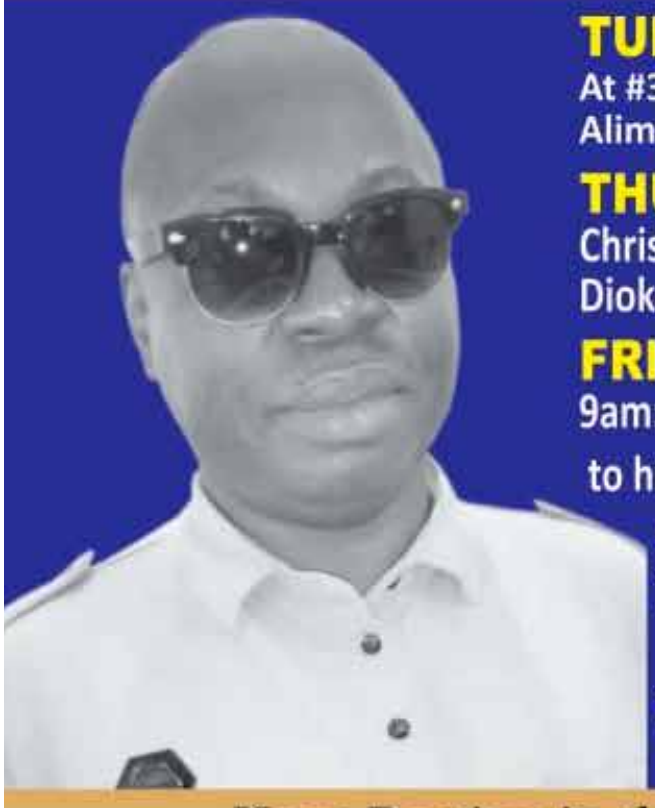
We the family of
Mr. & Mrs. Louis Ajuonuma
of Njuko of Dioka Nzerem in Ehime
Mbano LGA. Imo State.
Announces the passing on of our beloved Son,
Brother, Uncle and Father;

Late Mr. Ignatius Ikechukwu AJUONUMA

AKA: OKOTO

AGE 51 YEARS (1972-2023)

BURIAL ARRANGEMENT:



TUESDAY 16TH DEC. 2023
At #3 Siraj Olatunji Street Captain, Abule Egba by Iyana Ipaja
Alimosho Local Government Area, Lagos State.

THURSDAY 4TH JAN. 2024:
Christian Wake-keep at his father's compound, Njoke Village,
Dioka Nzerem, Ehime Mbano LGA. Imo State.

FRIDAY 5TH JAN. 2024:
9am: Body leaves Joint Mortuary Hospital, Mbano Hqtrs.
to his fathers comp.

9.30am: Body lies in state at his father's compound.
10.am: Funeral Service by the Last Days Messenger Inc.
Dioka Nzere, Ehime Mbano LGA.
12noon: Interment follows immediately after
funeral service at his father's compound.

Keep Resting in the Bosom of the Lord.

Signed:
MR. LOUIS AJUONUMA
For the family

Liverpool 4-2 Newcastle: Magic Mo Salah Dances Through The Deluge To Sign Off In Style





The rain fell in stair rods at Anfield on Monday night. The wind whipped it in from the Mersey and turned the first Premier League match of the new year into a battle against the elements. Mo Salah negotiated the deluge as if it were a balmy breeze and proved himself, for the umpteenth time, a man for all seasons.

Salah, who scored twice, made one for Cody Gakpo and managed to miss a penalty, too, was the inspiration for a Liverpool side who moved three points clear at the top of the table with this wild 4-2 victory. They are five points ahead of Arsenal and Manchester City.

Salah is leaving to take part in the Africa Cup of Nations and will miss a clutch of Liverpool games this month but he gave his club and his fans a dreamy performance to remember him by here. Only a brilliant performance by Newcastle goalkeeper Martin Dubravka stopped this being a humiliation for Newcastle.

Eddie Howe's side has now lost seven of its last eight games and the pressure is building on him. The scoreline does not reflect the bankruptcy of Newcastle's play. For all the talk of their injuries, they fielded close to a full-strength team here and offered very, very little going forward.

With an FA Cup tie against rivals Sunderland on Saturday and two league games against Manchester City and Aston Villa next up, the pressure on Howe is likely to rise and rise from the Saudi Arabian state, the richest owners in English football.

Newcastle had started the evening 13 points behind Liverpool and, perhaps more pertinently, 10 points behind Spurs, who are fifth and in the last of the Champions League spots that may be available to English clubs come the end of the season.

Howe's side knew, too, that history said their chances of stopping the bleeding at Anfield were not good. They had not won at Liverpool since April 1994 when Rob Lee and Andy Cole were the scorer. The omens got worse when they took into account they had lost their past five games - home and away - against Klopp's side.

It was just their luck, too, that this was Mo Salah's final game for Liverpool before he flies to Ivory Coast for the Africa Cup of Nations.

Salah is the Premier League's joint second top scorer this season, a goalscoring phenomenon. How Newcastle would have loved him to have boarded the plane to West Africa before this match began.

Salah started brightly and nearly created the opening goal for Liverpool in the 13th minute when he clipped a considered cross into the Newcastle box and it eluded the defence and found Darwin Nunez.

Nunez helped it on, Martin Dubravka blocked it and when Curtis Jones fired in another shot, it was blocked on the line by Fabian Schar.

Liverpool had a Luis Diaz goal ruled out for offside against Nunez by VAR but they thought they were about to break the deadlock midway through the half when Diaz danced past the challenge of Dan Burn in the box and was then brought down by a lunge from Sven Botman. Referee Anthony Taylor pointed to the spot.

Salah went for power, not placement. He lashed his shot to Dubravka's left but close enough for the goalkeeper to hurl himself at it and push it out. Even then the danger was not over.

The rebound fell to Trent Alexander-Arnold, who had been lighting the game up with his brilliant passing, but it would not quite come down for him quickly enough and he lifted his follow-up high over the bar.

Burn had a diving header ruled out for an offside and Liverpool missed another golden opportunity to take the lead 10 minutes before the interval when Nunez was played through one-on-one with Dubravka after he shrugged Botman off the ball.

Nunez tried to bend his effort around the Newcastle goalkeeper but, once again, it was too close to Dubravka and he beat it away. The finishing of Nunez has to improve if he is to become a fixture in this Liverpool team.

Alexander-Arnold nearly scored what would have been one of the goals of the season seven minutes before half-time when he ran on to a bouncing ball not far from the corner flag on Newcastle's left flank.

Alexander-Arnold hit it first time with the outside of his right foot and it swerved viciously over Dubravka's head and cannoned off the far post. The technique was as sweet as Marco van Basten's for his famous goal against the Soviet Union in Euro 1988.

The result, sadly for Liverpool fans, was different and when the whistle blew for half time, the statistics showed Liverpool had had 18 shots to Newcastle's one. The whistle was met by a chorus of boos, presumably aimed at the officials.

All the frustration disappeared three minutes after the interval when Liverpool took the lead with a move that started on their own goal-line. Alexander-Arnold lifted it forward to Nunez on the half way line and he laid it off first time to Dominik Szoboszlai.

Szoboszlai played the ball out to the left to Diaz, he cut inside and played the ball across the box to Nunez. Nunez eschewed the chance to shoot and laid the ball across the face of goal to Salah, who tapped in from close range. It was his 150th league goal for Liverpool.

Liverpool threatened to cut loose. Salah volleyed a cross into the box and it seemed Nunez must score but his shot was brilliantly saved by Dubravka. The Newcastle goalkeeper was having one of the best nights of his career. A couple of minutes later, he pushed a stinging drive from Nunez over the bar.

But then, just when it seemed Newcastle were staring down the barrel of a humiliation, Newcastle hit back. Anthony Gordon, back in his home city, threaded a pass through to Alexander Isak, who outstripped Virgil van Dijk, and placed a precise shot beyond Alisson. On the sidelines, Klopp laughed but it was not the kind of laugh that suggested amusement.

Nunez missed another chance in the 63rd minute, glancing a header wide when he should have scored. He was substituted 60 seconds later. A minute after that, Dubravka produced another flying save to deny Salah.

Dubravka was playing like a super-human. When Newcastle only half-cleared a Liverpool corner, it fell to substitute Cody Gakpo 14 yards out. He hit his shot hard and true but Dubravka produced another superb save, diving low to his right to keep it out. The home side had had 28 shots to Newcastle's three. Liverpool fans were beginning to regard the game with a kind of disbelief.

Just when the levels of frustration were reaching boiling point for the home support again, Liverpool went back into the lead. It was always going to take a piece of brilliance to unlock the redoubtable Newcastle defence and Salah dutifully provided it.

The Egypt forward played a delightful reverse pass through the legs of a defender and into the path of Diogo Jota, who only had to square it to give Curtis Jones Liverpool's second tap-in of the night.

There was as much relief as there was joy but the celebrations began in earnest 12 minutes from time when Salah played a breathtaking pass into the box with the outside of his left foot and Gakpo prodded it in.

Relief gave way to consternation and anxiety 10 minutes from the end when Botman climbed highest at a corner to score a second for the visitors but five minutes from the end, the result was finally put out of Newcastle's reach.

Alexis Mac Allister played yet another fantastic pass through the heart of the Newcastle defence to Jota and Jota rounded Dubravka. Jota went down and even though it seemed to be a delayed fall, the referee gave the penalty. Salah stepped up to take the penalty and this time, he buried it in the back of the net.

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