Team Nigeria returns in triumph–A golden reign in Accra, a warning to the world

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Food is a political weapon... Africa's foremost defence is self-sufficiency in food. Until we attain a substantial measure of freedom from food dependency, we are vulnerable to manipulation by the wealthier nations - Jerry Rawlings

Former Heartland Coach Chijioke Osuagwu Urges NFF To Appoint Grassroots Football Scouts

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Chelle accuses DR Congo staff of 'doing voodoo'





Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity: Okon-George in women's 400m final

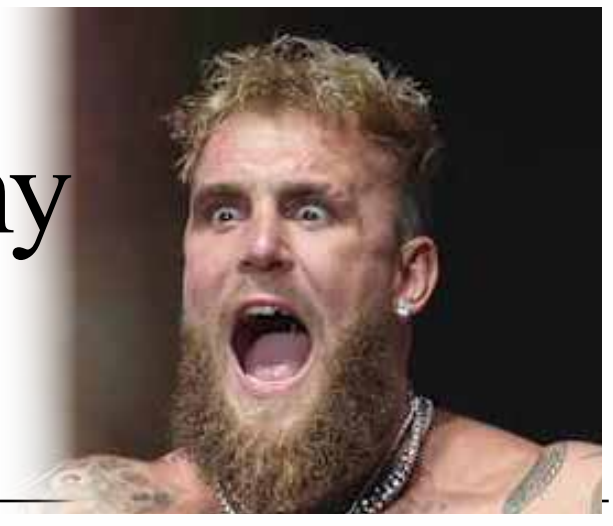


Nigeria presents new Cricket strategy to ICC

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Jake Paul to fight Anthony Joshua in December



Golfers donate N6m to charity homes at TotalEnergies tourney



Two Charity Homes got N4 million each as the 29th TotalEnergies Charity Golf Tournament ended in Lagos at the weekend.

While the golfers contributed the sum of N6 million, TotalEnergies doled out N2 million to the two Charity Homes, Child Lifeline (Gbagada), which educates and reunites street-connected children, and Nigerwives Braille Book Production Centre (Victoria Island), which provides Braille books to schools throughout Nigeria.

Speaking at the end of the tournament held at the Golf Section of Ikoyi Club 1938, the Managing Director of TotalEnergies Upstream Company in Nigeria, Mr Matthieu Bouyer, described the 29th edition of the charity tournament as a "unique occasion" where the joy of sport seamlessly blends with the spirit of giving, and every swing taken leaves a lasting impact on lives.

"Whether you are a passionate golfer or stepping onto the green for the first time, your participation today is invaluable not only to us, but even more so to the many individuals whose futures you help brighten. Today's tournament is not just about fairways and scorecards; it's about experiencing the thrill of a good game while embracing compassion, strengthening our community, and reaffirming our commitment to giving back.

"At TotalEnergies, we recognise the remarkable benefits of enjoying a good game. Golf isn't just exercise for the body; it refreshes the mind, sharpens focus, and builds friendships. The camaraderie and competition out here today remind us that life's best moments often come from coming together for a worthy cause. More importantly, the greatest victories are won not only on the course, but also in our hearts—when we choose to give generously to those who need it most.

"Our support for sport goes beyond this tournament. From proudly sponsoring AFCON to backing the National Men's Division One & Two Basketball Leagues, the Nigeria Oil and Gas Industry Games (NOGIG), and the OML 58 grassroots football tournament, we invest in sports because we believe in the power of sports to inspire, unite, and empower," he said.

Bouyer said that the charity tournament has, since 2011, grown into a cherished tradition for TotalEnergies.

"It is more than a game—it's a movement fueled by your generosity. The funds you raise today are not just numbers; they are lifelines for our selected Charity Homes—covering assistive devices, medications, therapy, counselling, and awareness campaigns. When you give, you help restore hope and dignity to the less privileged, reminding us that true fulfilment comes from helping others."

On the field, John Christopher Agrati emerged as TotalEnergies Best Man, just as Sabina Brochard was crowned the TotalEnergies Best Lady.

Silas Galba won the men's stableford with 37 points, while Folabi Balogun (36 points) finished second, with Victor Irince-Koko (35 points) in third position.

Aissatou Diof won the Ladies category with 36 points, Fortune LongJohn was second with 34 points, while Ronke Iyiola was third with 29 points.

In the Nearest to the Pin Hole in One category, Paul Brisibe emerged as the winner for the men, while Sabine Brochard picked the Ladies trophy.

White Tigers win back-to-back Spires 5-Aside tourney



Lagos Island based club, White Tigers have emerged champions of the 2025 Spires 5-Aside Naija Street Soccer Tournament in Lagos.

The Coach Emmanuel Olom tutored side defeated Papa SA football club 4-0 in the final of this year's event at the Stables Sports Center in Surulere on Saturday to retain the crown the first won last season.

White Tigers went home with a prize money of N5 million, Papa SA received the sum of N3 million as runner-up, while Greater Tomorrow FC pocketed a consolation prize of N1 million after they defeated Chekas United 3-1 to claim the third placed honors.

For the individual honors, Ojo Rhaman finished as this season top scorer with 14 goals, and he also emerged as the MVP of the tournament. He received the sum of N500, 000 for both awards.

Coach Emmanuel Olom of white Tigers got N250, 000, as the coach of the tournament, while the Golden Glove award went to the goalkeeper of Papa SA, Sadiq Ridwan who received N250, 000 cash prize as well.

The initiator of the tournament, Dr. Bankole Allibay said Spires would continue to sustain the standards as they hope to build on the success of this year's event ahead of 2026 and beyond.

In his words: We have already commenced our preparations ahead of the next edition, and we are talking to a few brands to see how we can jointly take this to a whole new level."

"The Spires 5-Aside Tourney is beyond just playing football, it's a deliberate move to empower the youth hence we introduce the "Sports Meet Tech" component as part of this year's program and footballers were able to learn modern skills like artificial intelligence, machine learning, graphics designs, coding and more. So, the success is there for everyone to see," Allibay said.

This year's tournament had (40) forty teams compete in the divisional qualifiers, while the (16) sixteen finalists made it to the state championship.

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Nigeria presents new Cricket strategy to ICC



The Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) convened a two-day strategy meeting in Lagos to redefine and reposition cricket in Nigeria.

The NCF's focus on the 7th and 8th of November was a policy review strategy for the overall growth and development of the sport in Nigeria.

Two resource persons from South Africa, Prof. Jacques Faul, Chief Executive Officer of Titans Cricket Club, South Africa and ICC, and Cricket South Africa Brand Marketing and Commercial Consultant Mr. Eddy Fwamba delivered the strategy seminar.

The participants for the seminar were strategically selected, comprising NCF Board Members, Senior Management Staff, and stakeholders from various regions across the country. The two-day interactive session afforded the NCF the opportunity to realign its vision with the new set goals and objectives.

The President of the Federation, Dr. Uyi Akpata, opened proceedings on day one with 'our journey so far' as a Federation, highlighting the gains in grassroots development, high performance, administration, and strategic partnerships. The President also shed light on the challenges faced in achieving some of the set targets of the NCF, while reiterating the essence of the 'Strategic Meeting.'

The Regional Development Manager, ICC Africa, Mr. Justine Lyngialigi, spoke on the need for the NCF's renewed strategy to align with the ICC. He further presented the scorecard to show the current reality in areas where they had done well and areas they could improve to maximize the opportunities offered by the ICC.

Prof. Jacques Faul engaged the participants on the topic 'Resetting for the Future.' New ideas and strategies were broken down carefully to present a clearer picture of 'Where we are as a Federation,' 'Where we need to be,' and 'How do we get there in the near future.' This led to a breakout session into groups by the participants, with a focus on 'High Performance and Development,' wrapping up day one proceedings with each group making presentations.

Day two resumed with a focus on commercials. Eddy Fwamba delivered a lucid presentation on 'Enhancing our brand as a Federation,' 'Targeting partners to fund the game,' and 'Increasing our fan base as a sport.' Eddy wrapped up with ideas and strategies for sustainable finance.

\\The sports branding guru told our reporter that 'the NCF Board is looking for the right thing for Nigeria – building the cricket brand and fan base,' while Jacques explained what success should look like for the Nigeria Cricket Federation.

The NCF President, Uyi Akpata, announced the appointment of Committee Heads under the Board of the Nigeria Cricket Federation that will drive the new policy and strategies for the next four years.

Jake Paul to fight Anthony Joshua in December



Influencer-turned-boxer Jake Paul will fight two-time heavyweight world champion, Anthony Joshua, in a much-anticipated bout on December 19, 2025, in Miami, U.S.

Promoters, Most Valuable Promotions (MVP) and Matchroom Boxing, made the announcement on Monday, with the rules for the controversial heavyweight fight between both men confirmed.

"The fight will take place at the Kaseya Center, home of the Miami Heat, and the men will come face-to-face at a launch press conference on Friday," the statement read, adding that it will be a professionally sanctioned bout, fought over eight three-minute rounds with 10-oz gloves.

According to the statement, the fight will be broadcast globally on Netflix, while also mooting that both men could earn close to $100 million.

"This isn't an AI simulation. This is Judgment Day," Paul said in a press release. "A professional heavyweight fight against an elite world champion in his prime.

"When I beat Anthony Joshua, every doubt disappears, and no one can deny me the opportunity to fight for a world title.

"To all my haters, this is what you wanted. To the people of the United Kingdom, I am sorry. On Friday, December 19, under the lights in Miami, live globally only on Netflix, the torch gets passed and Britain's Goliath gets put to sleep. I KNOWWWW YOU GOT EM PICKED HAHAHHA."

Former Olympic champion Joshua added: "Jake or anyone can get this work. No mercy. I took some time out and I'm coming back with a mega show. It's a big opportunity for me."

Meanwhile, British-Nigerian heavyweight Joshua could make his long-anticipated return to Nigeria for a homecoming bout in early 2026, with the Moshood Kashimawo Olawale (MKO) Abiola National Stadium in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja identified as the proposed venue.

The plan was earlier disclosed by Nigerian promoter Dr. Ezekiel Adamu, Chief Executive Officer of Balmoral Group and son of sports administrator Dr. Amos Adamu in September. He confirmed that discussions with Joshua's team had reached an advanced stage.

"Joshua has always said that before he ends his career, he wants to fight in Nigeria, and we are going to make that fight happen," Adamu told The Punch. "If we had an offer from Nigeria, it's a match made in heaven."

The promoter explained that the fight is being considered for the first quarter of 2026 and may involve an African opponent. Among the boxers being discussed are France's Tony Yoka, Congo's Martin Bakole, and former WBC champion Deontay Wilder, who has Nigerian heritage.

Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity: Okon-George in women's 400m final



TEAM Nigeria's medals haul is likely to increase today when the country runs in three final races at the ongoing Sixth Islamic Solidarity Games holding in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The team earned more medals yesterday when Pamela Amaechi won silver in the final of the women's discuss event with a throw of 56.99 metres. She narrowly lost the gold medal to Cameroon's Nora Atim Monie, who had a throw of 57.04 metres, while Turkey's Ozlem Becerek finished third with a throw of 55.56 metres.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's Patience Okon-George has qualified for the final of the women's 400m after an impressive second place finish in one of the semifinals with a time of 52.92 seconds.

The three-time national champion will hope for a podium finish in the final of the event this night at the Prince Faisal bin Fahad Stadium. She will compete with athletes from Morocco, Turkey, Niger, Uganda, Bahrain and Guyana for the gold medal.

Nigeria's Kure Samuel Adams will also compete for medals in the final of the men's Javelin today. With a personal best of 77.45m and a season's best of 76.79m, Adam is confident of a podium finish in the final.

The men and women's 4x100m relay finals are also areas that Team Nigeria hopes for more medals at the games today.

Nigeria has so far won a total of 17 medals, with six gold, seven Silver and four bronze medals.

Reply

GOtv Boxing Night 34: Expect war, 'Happy Boy' tells 'Tiny' ahead of title bout

SODIQ "Happy Boy" Adeleke has promised to unleash war on Durotimi "Tiny" Agboola when they fight for the National Super Bantamweight title on December 26b at the GOtv Boxing Night 34.

Adeleke, the most recent winner of the Mojisola Ogunsanya Memorial Trophy for Best Boxer at GOtv Boxing Night 33, is seeking to dethrone Agboola, the defending champion at the show billed for the Tafawa Balewa Square.

At the immediate past edition of the show, Adeleke went home with N1 million attached to the best boxer prize. The young boxer is expected to be one of the night's major attractions.

"Agboola will be made to look tiny. I cannot afford to lose this fight. I will not lose. I am sure. This is my first title attempt and I have to make it count. It will be war, real war. He cannot escape," he threatened.

Other key contests on the night include the National Lightweight challenge clash between Segun "Odi" Gbobaniyi and Tobiloba "Smiling Assassin" Ijomoni, light welterweight clash between Sodiq 'Smart Lion' Suleiman and Emmanuel "Ability" Abimbola, as well as Ezekiel 'Touch' Seun's duel with Toheeb 'Full Tank' Hassan in the super bantamweight division and the Sadam 'Baby Boxer' Oladipupo duel with Imole 'System' Oloyede in an eight-round lightweight contest.



The GOtv Boxing Night 34 Jams Festival, organised by Flykite Productions, will hold on Boxing Day with live music and other forms of entertainment featuring alongside the night's bouts.

Southeast Zonal Badminton Championship set to serve off in Enugu

Enugu is set to host the fourth edition of the Southeast Zonal Badminton Championship, scheduled to take place from November 20 to 22 at the Indoor Gymnasium Sports Hall, Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium.

The championship is organised by the Southeast Badminton Outreach, in partnership with the Badminton Federation of Nigeria (BFN) and the Enugu State Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, and proudly powered by the Bet9ja Foundation.

The championship will feature top talents from Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States, with players, coaches, and officials competing across the male, female, and veteran categories. Participants will showcase exciting skills and compete for honours in what promises to be a thrilling three-day event.

This year's edition will also serve as an important preparatory platform for assessing the mental and competitive readiness of athletes ahead of the upcoming National Sports Festival to be hosted in Enugu.

Speaking ahead of the event, 1996 Olympian and Southeast Zonal Representative on the Board of the Badminton Federation of Nigeria (BFN), Mrs. Oby Edoga-Solaja, reaffirmed the tournament's core objective: discovering, developing, and nurturing the next generation of badminton talent within the zone.

o called on corporate organisations and well-meaning individuals to continually support the sport through both financial and moral contributions.

Mrs. Solaja further disclosed that ongoing efforts are being made across the zone to provide essential equipment, coaching education, and umpire training, all geared toward enhancing the standard and growth of badminton in the Southeast.

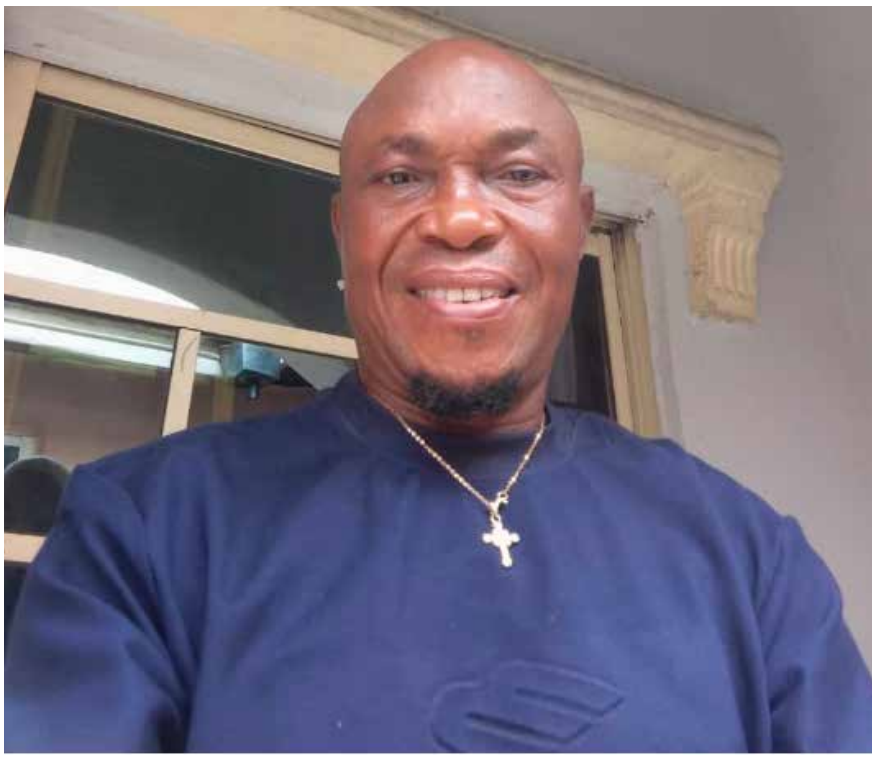
Former Heartland Coach Chijioke Osuagwu Urges NFF To Appoint Grassroots Football Scouts

A former head coach at Heartland of Owerri and Abia Warriors of Umuahia, Chijioke Gabriel Osuagwu has sent a clarion call to egg heads of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to quickly appoint grassroots scouts to fish out hidden talents across the country, Sports247 reports.

Speaking against the background of the 2025 FIFA U17 World Cup kicking off in Qatar without Nigeria in attendance and set to even miss the next edition in the same country, Coach Chijioke stressed that it is a wake up call that the NFF must not take for granted.

The highly acclaimed youth football zealot, who was part of the technical crew that performed wonders with the now defunct National Grassroots Dream Team from 1998 to 2009, put himself forward among other experts of the terrain to set in motion a revolutionary approach that will revive Nigeria's lost glory in global youth football.

Osuagwu, who was until recently an assistant to Finidi George at Enyimba of Aba, before which he served as head coach at three Lagos-based clubs – Flaming Flamingoes, Stationary Stores and AS Racines – as well as Bussdor FC and Police FC of Owerri, added in an exclusive chat with Sports247 that his credentials qualify him to be part of an adhoc panel the NFF should set up to salvage Nigeria's lost glory in youth football.



He stated at length: "I am now presently based in Abia State, but my most recent impact on football was in the 2023/2024 season when I joined Enyimba as an assistant coach. I enjoyed working at the best club in Nigeria.

"I had an option to rejoin Abia Warriors, which I coached to gain promotion in 2013 to the Nigeria Premier League. I opted instead to join Enyimba in order to beef up my CV, and I helped them secure a continental ticket."

Coach Chijioke then took a look into the future and declared emphatically that he still has lofty dreams of playing a key role in the revival of Nigeria's youth sector, just as he did during his days in the technical committee of Nigeria Grassroots Football Federation (NGFF), ably led by Alhaji Agboola Dabiri.

The former technical director at Diamond Football Academy of Umuahia added; "I am now managing an NLO team named Ahudiyannem FC, based in Abiriba. They are the current Abia State FA Cup champions.

"I want to help them retain the cup or at least play in the finals. I also want to promote the team to the NNL, which is a task that must be done by God's grace. As I do that, though, I'm not forgetting about my first love … which is grassroots football.

"So, my appeal goes to the NFF to create more opportunities and jobs for coaches who have paid their quarters in the growth of Nigeria's youth sector.

"They should appoint us as scouts, consultants and assessors in different states … to go about picking young talented players ranging from the ages of 16, 17, 18 and 20 years."

He concluded with a look at the ongoing Cadet Mundial and stressed: "Nigeria should not be absent at the U17 World Cup, because this country is blessed with abundant talents.

"I recently got a good example in a boy named Love Taiwo, who a scout from Lagos helped me get among eight very good young players. He's a midfielder who I consider is blessed with huge talent.

"That reminds me of my achievements with Grassroots Dream Team, where we produced the likes of Femi Ajilore, Ayo Makinwa, Charlibe Okolie, Ifeanyi Emeghara, Nnamdi Oduamadi, Abiola Dauda, Kazeem Ayila, Chima Uchechi, Phillip Onyemah and Dafe Omonigho, among many others."

World Cup: All countries that have qualified for intercontinental playoffs revealed

The six teams that will play in the 2026 World Cup intercontinental playoffs are now confirmed.

Bolivia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Jamaica, New Caledonia, and Suriname.

They will all participate in a mini-tournament that will take place in Mexico in March 2026.

By the end of Tuesday night, 42 countries had automatically qualified for next year's tournament.

The remaining six spots will be filled by the UEFA and inter-confederation playoffs in March.

The European play-off draw will take place on Thursday, November 20, at FIFA headquarters.

Confirmed in play-offs as European Qualifiers group runners-up: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Denmark, Italy, Kosovo, Poland, Republic of Ireland, Slovakia, Türkiye, Ukraine, Wales.

Confirmed in play-offs via Nations League route: Romania, Sweden, Northern Ireland, North Macedonia.

Stakeholders urge probe of two botched World Cup bids



IRKED by the alleged lacklustre handling of Nigeria's campaign to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup billed for the United States, Canada and Mexico, by the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), aggrieved stakeholders want an immediate probe of the matter.

For starters, they are urging the government to specifically bring to book those whose action or inaction led to the dismal performance of the Super Eagles in Group C of the African qualifying series, and the playoff, last Sunday.

Urging President Bola Tinubu not to allow unpatriotic Nigerians sweep the alleged corruption that marred the country's bid to qualify for the World Cup, two former national team stars, Harrison Jalla and Adegoke Adelabu, said that the country's "football needs a total overhaul" as matters stand.

Nigeria failed to qualify for the 2022 World Cup held in Qatar, and on Sunday, the Super Eagles were made to look ordinary by DR Congo that ended the country's journey in the race to the 2026 World Cup.

Jala, a former president of the National Association of Nigerian Players (NANF), told The Guardian, yesterday that it is time for swift presidential actions over the back-to-back failure.

"The president must order the dissolution of the NFF board now, and call for reforms to totally restructure Nigeria Football."

On his part, Adelabu, now a sports scientist, said: "It is unfortunate that we failed to qualify for next year's World Cup after missing the 2022 edition. The issue is, there are so many allegations against the NFF, which the government has not addressed.

"We are not transparent enough to enable proper investigations that will help us to identify the problems that we are contending with. The NFF is run like a cult. They are not accountable to anyone. If these issues are swept under the carpet again, there may be no redemption for our football.

The former Eko United (Asiwaju Babes) coach added: "The important thing in any serious-minded institution is to be able to evaluate performance with the hope of finding where it failed, and thereafter develop strategies to ameliorate the problem. I think the government should immediately set up a panel of investigation to know what went wrong and how to correct it for future purposes."

Lamenting the damage Nigeria's failure to qualify for the 2026 World Cup has done to the country's image, former JIB Rocks and Vasco Dagama of Enugu star, Theodore Chukwuemeka said: "It is unbelievable that Nigeria, which was once the fifth best football playing country in the world, will not feature in the World Cup for the second consecutive time even when Africa's slot has been increased from five to 10.

"The Federal Government said that it budgeted N1 billion for the African playoff, yet the players went on strike over unpaid allowances and nothing has happened to the officials responsible for that disgrace.

"When the World Cup kicks off in North America next June, the so-called Giant of Africa will be sitting at home watching the likes of Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Algeria, Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia and possibly DR Congo rubbing shoulders with the world's best teams. The Super Eagles and their fans will be spectators. We cannot continue like this."

NSC Thumbs Up Mbata's Performance At World Boxing Cup

National Sports Commission (NSC) have commended the participation of Nigeria's boxer Patricia Mbata at the 2025 World Boxing Cup Finals in Greater Noida, India.

Mbata competed in the Women's 70 kg division against one of the world's best and represented the nation with dedication.

NSC noted that although the bout ended with a unanimous decision in favour of her Uzbek opponent, Mbata's presence at the global competition underscores Nigeria's ambition to expand its representation on the world boxing stage.

Media reports identify her as possibly the sole African competitor at the event, reinforcing the significance of her role as a continental torch-bearer.

The statement noted that the NSC remains committed to providing full support, training, and exposure for Nigerian female boxers as part of it's strategic focus on elevating performance and broadening the country's global footprint in the sport.



Top Edo official Mrs. Sabina Chikere, tells Super Eagles to put behind DR Congo loss



The Executive Director of Sports Development and Operations, Edo State Sports Commission (ESSC), Mrs. Sabina Chikere, has urged the Super Eagles to transform the anguish of failing to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup into a fiery resolve to conquer Africa when the 2025 AFCON kicks off in Morocco.

Nigeria's hopes of appearing on football's grandest stage were extinguished on Sunday following a dramatic 4-3 penalty loss to DR Congo after a tension-soaked 1-1 draw. The defeat struck the nation like a thunderbolt, leaving millions heartbroken, with Mrs. Chikere joining the list.

Speaking with deep emotion, she described the match as "a painful reminder of how cruel football can be," noting that she watched every minute with faith in the team's capability and with firm belief in the talents of Victor Osimhen and his teammates.

But instead of dwelling on what went wrong, Mrs. Chikere called on the players to turn their frustration into fuel.

"This pain must not break you, it must build you," she declared. "Great teams are not defined by setbacks but by how they rise after them. The AFCON is around the corner, and it is the perfect stage for redemption."

She emphasized that Nigeria possesses some of the finest talents on the continent, from former African Players of the Year, Victor Osimhen and Ademola Lookman, to Calvin Bassey, Frank Onyeka, Samuel Chukwueze, Semi Ajayi and Wilfred Ndidi, insisting that the nation still believes in every single one of them.

"You fought until the very last moment. You played with heart, strength and national pride. Football will test you, but it will also reward you. Keep your heads high, Nigeria sees your effort and stands with you," she said.

She urged the players to confront the future with renewed determination.

"Let his heartbreak sharpen your hunger. Let the African continent feel the strength of a wounded but awakened giant. The 2025 AFCON is your moment to reclaim glory, restore pride, and remind the world who the Super Eagles truly are," Mrs Sabina Chikere added.

Mrs. Chikere stressed that the road to victory begins with unity, discipline, and belief, adding that the team has everything required to soar higher than ever.

"Nigeria believes in you. Now go and write the comeback story Africa will never forget," she concluded.

Islamic Solidarity Games: Amaechi wins Silver as Chioma finishes Fourth in Women's Discus

Team Nigeria added another medal at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh as Obiageri Pamela Amaechi claimed silver in the women's discus event.

Amaechi secured second place with a best throw of 56.99m, achieved on her fifth attempt after earlier efforts of 51.51m, 55.57m, a foul on her third throw, and 54.27m on her fourth. She finished just behind Cameroon's Nora Atim Monie, who won gold with a throw of 57.04m.

Although Amaechi could not get close to her personal best of 64.80m set in August 2025, she said she was satisfied given the timing of the competition.

"It has been a hectic season, and I had planned to rest and reboot ahead of next year and the Commonwealth Games," she said. "But when Nigeria calls, you have to answer. My body has already shut down for the season, so getting here took a lot. I would have loved to push for gold or near my PB, but I'm proud to represent my country."

Fellow Nigerian and African record holder Chioma Chukwujindu 'CiCi' Onyekwere finished fourth after struggling to match her top form.

"I'm happy to be here, but I wish I could have done better," Chioma said. "My body just couldn't respond. I was already preparing for my break before the invite came, and I arrived only a day before the event due to a tight schedule. Now I just want to rest and prepare for next season with full focus on the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow."



Team Nigeria returns in triumph–A golden reign in Accra, a warning to the world

BY MAXWELL KUMOYE

Team Nigeria touched down in Lagos on Monday, carrying not just luggage, but a statement, a thunderous declaration that the new kings of world scrabble wear green and white.

Twenty players. Seven officials. One united fire.

And together, they dethroned the almighty United States in Accra to emerge World Scrabble Champions, outclassing 27 other nations in a tournament packed with intensity, adrenaline, and pure grit.

Led by a former Continental Champion and captain Rex Ogbakpa, the Nigerians didn't just win, they dominated.

The devastating duo of Oluwatimilehin Doko, the current Continental Champion and his tactical partner Abdulmumin Jimoh, both from the Gateway State, carved through the field with clinical brilliance, turning the once-invincible Americans into mere spectators. It was chess with letters, war with words and Nigeria was the master strategist.

Adding firepower were the five "Word Lords" from Warri Scrabble Club, whose razor-sharp gameplay kept opponents scrambling. Lagos came loaded too, with Dipo Akanbi, John Aiyedun, and Hakeem Olaribigbe, all Lagos civil servants, stamping authority with ice-cold precision.



Edo State's pride, Godwin Victor and George Ezinore, stood tall, delivering performances that echoed Nigeria's strength in depth.

In the heart of the victory, the message was unmistakable. Team Nigeria's never-say-die spirit, unity, and courage were the real champions.

And nobody captured this better than Lagos ace Dipo Akanbi, who hailed the squad's attitude as "a brotherhood built on fight, faith, and absolute belief," praising the collective spirit that fueled the triumph.

The accolades flowed swiftly.

World Champion Wellington Jighere showered praise on the team, describing their performance as "a powerful reminder of Nigeria's unmatched pedigree in global scrabble."

Vice President of the Nigeria Scrabble Federation, Lovejoy Ogbuokiri Ezinna, not only applauded the historic win but also backed his words with financial support to the team, a gesture that drew warm appreciation from players and officials who had given everything for the country.

The oldest member of Team Nigeria, Chinedu Thorpe amorously called Sidespin, captures the feeling of the group with these short but very heart warming words, "Thank you NSF for a wonderful and remarkable opportunity to represent the country.

"Congratulations Team Nigeria once again. We rule the World."

Back home, preparations are already underway to present the gleaming gold-plated trophy to the National Sports Commission (NSC), a moment that will etch yet another chapter in Nigeria's rich scrabble legacy.

For now, the champions savor the glory. In two years, they will defend not just a title but the pride of a nation.

Team Nigeria reigns. And the world is officially on notice.

"Enough of Leaving Things Too Late!" — SSA Adeboye Backs President Tinubu, Says Nigeria Must Take Football Development Serious After World Cup Exit



Senior Special Assistant to the President on Grassroots Sports Development, Hon. Adeyinka Adeboye, has thrown his full support behind President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's call for a total rebuild of Nigerian football following the Super Eagles' heartbreaking World Cup playoff loss to DR Congo on Sunday night.

Speaking hours after the President issued a statement urging the team to regroup and begin immediate preparation for the next Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON 2025), Adeboye said the President's reaction shows clearly that Nigeria has a leader who genuinely loves sports and is fully committed to restoring national pride.

"You can see from the President's message that he is a true lover of sports. This is not a time to point fingers. It is a time to take ourselves seriously," Adeboye said.

"We must give credit to the Super Eagles for their effort, but we cannot continue leaving things too late. The work to reclaim our glory must start now."

Adeboye, who has been with the team throughout the playoff build-up in Morocco, described the defeat as painful but insisted that Nigerian football is rich with talent and potential—if properly harnessed.

"We have players across the world, excellent talents everywhere. But talent alone will not work. We need structure, early preparation, discipline, scouting, and a development system that produces consistency," he stressed.

The SSA echoed President Tinubu's charge for administrators, coaches, and stakeholders to return to the drawing board and rebuild the national team with AFCON 2025 as the next priority.

President Tinubu had earlier urged the team to put the defeat behind them and shift focus entirely to the continental championship scheduled for December 2025 to January 2026 in Morocco, noting that the nation still expects the Super Eagles to reclaim their dominance.

Adeboye agreed fully, saying:

"AFCON is around the corner. We cannot waste time mourning. It is time to plan, to act, and to show the world that Nigeria still has the fire. The President has shown leadership—now the rest of us must match that energy."

He called on Nigerians not to lose faith in the Super Eagles, assuring that with proper planning and discipline, Nigeria will rise stronger.

"Our football has suffered enough from last-minute decisions. Going forward, early preparation must become our culture. This is the only way to restore the glory of Nigerian football."

Adeboye concluded by saying that the journey to AFCON 2025 begins today, not tomorrow.

NFF Vows Sweeping Changes Following World Cup Qualification Setback

The Nigeria Football Federation has promised sweeping reforms after issuing a formal apology to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and to Nigerians in the wake of the Super Eagles' failure to secure a place at the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The national team was defeated by the Democratic Republic of Congo on penalties in Sunday's Africa Play-off Final in Rabat, a result that confirmed Nigeria's absence from football's biggest stage for the second tournament in a row.

In its statement, the Federation expressed profound sadness, acknowledging the widespread frustration and disappointment across the country. The NFF described football as a unifying force for millions of Nigerians and admitted that falling short of qualification had left a deep emotional impact. According to the Federation, the dressing room was filled with pain and silence after the defeat, with players and staff fully aware of the expectations placed upon them.

The NFF extended gratitude to the Federal Government, the National Sports Commission, the National Assembly, government ministries, various agencies, Nigeria's diplomatic partners, the media and supporters who remained committed throughout the qualifying campaign. The Federation emphasized that such support would be crucial as the national team begins its rebuilding process.

Looking ahead, the NFF stated that preparations for the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco will serve as the first step toward recovery. The tournament is expected to provide an opportunity for reflection, restructuring and renewed purpose. A thorough review of both technical and administrative shortcomings has been promised, with the Federation pledging to confront all areas that contributed to the World Cup setback.

In its message, the NFF assured Nigerians that decisive action will be taken to restore confidence in the Super Eagles and to elevate the national team's standing on the global stage. The Federation insisted that this moment, though painful, would mark the beginning of a determined effort to ensure that Nigerian football rises again.

World Cup playoffs : Bayelsa House Committee on Sports Chairman Laments Super Eagles defeat



Chairman of the Bayelsa State House Committee on Sports Hon. Barrister Tare Porri has expressed shock at the inability of the Super Eagles to fly over Leopards of DR Congo in the finals of CAF World Cup 2026 playoffs.

The Super Eagles Sunday night at the Crown Prince Moulay El Hassan Stadium, Rabat Morocco lost by 3-4 penalties to the Leopards thereby ending the country's hope of being part of the intercontinental playoffs in Mexico in March next year.

Speaking on the match, Hon. Porri who is the member representing Ekeremor Constituency 1 described it as a sad day for Nigerian football as it has denied the country back-to- back appearance at the World Cup.

"I'm really sad that Nigeria could not defeat DR Congo and qualify for the last playoffs that will involve six countries from different continents of the World.

"When the Super Eagles got the curtain raiser through Frank Onyeka in the third minutes of play, I thought we're going to carry the day and even after that goal was cancelled by Meshak Elia after 31 minutes of play, I still believed that Nigeria will beat their opponent.

"But I became skeptical when Victor Osimhen was substituted and the Congolese came out stronger in both the second half and the extra time and then the spot kick where we lost it", he lamented.

Hon. Porri believes that the absence of Osimhen contributed to the loss and was quick to advise the technical crew to look inwards and get more Osimhens in the team.

He was of the opinion that having lost the chance to be at the 2026 Mundial to be hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, the football house must immediately reorganize the team, shift their attention to the forthcoming AFCON and use that to redeem the image of the country's football.

"There's no doubt that the image of the country's football has been battered by the non qualification for the World Cup.

"It's unfortunate that with 9 slots allocated to Africa by FIFA, a country as big as Nigeria with rich football history will not be part of the biggest football tournament in the World when small countries that are not up to a state in the country like Cape Verde have booked a place at the tournament.

"My advise to the NFF is that they should immediately embark on total reorganization of the team because there are some players who have no business being part of the present Super Eagles.

"The NFF should also use the forthcoming AFCON finals to redeem the image of the country's football which has been so battered that countries like Benin Republic, Lesotho, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Rwanda are no longer afraid playing Nigeria", he concluded.

Football Veterans to thrill Dignitaries in Ibadan as Engineer Dotun Sanusi Installed Okanlomo Oodua

By: Sunday Agunbiade (Mr VAR)

Four teams from Oyo State Football veterans will trade tackle in a Mini football competition to Commemorate the installation of Engineer Jubril Dotun Sanusi as Okanlomo Oódua on December 4th to 5th ,2025.

The State Coordinator of PHSO, Pace Setters Humanitarian Support Organisation, Oyo State, Mogaji Igbinsola Sunday Paul purpularly known as Coach Chocho made this known to newsmen in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital that a day Soccer fiesta from football veterans will be part of the much anticipated programmes to honor Chief Jubril Dotun Sanusi, the Principal of the organization

The friendly matches which was tagged "Above 50" football fiesta will feature some prominent ex footballers who are in their Golden age to celebrate with the Community figure and a business mogul across the South West States. The football matches will hold on Saturday, 29th November, 2025 at Wesley College, Elekuro, Ibadan from 9am-3pm

The four invited legend teams will go home with 200k each as Appearance Bonus for a day program.

Other side attractions will feature DJ, Hype men and facilitations with some retired legs.

Eng Kazeem Olaide Sule, The State Chairman of PHSO, Chief Mrs Odekunbi Omolola, the State Matron and the Excecutives of the Organization will be on ground to celebrate the face of humanity called JDS. His Imperial Majesty, Oba Rasheed Adewolu Ladoja Arusa 1, The Olubadan of Ibadan and Oba James Oluyemi Odeniran would be the royal fathers of the day.

Mogaji Igbinsola Sunday Paul,a renowned season Coach, Football Administrator and an Astute Politician are ready to kick start the installation program of Ajia Olubadan and Okanlomo Odua with memorable thrillers to be remembered in the history of Ibadan.

The Arole Oodua and Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty Oba Babatunde Eniitan Ogunwusi Ojaja II, who confirmed that the Bada Olubadan Designate and Chairman of Ilaji Hotels and Sports Resort, Chief Jubril Dotun Sanusi, will be formally installed as Okanlomo Oódua on December 4th and 5th, 2025.

According to the Ooni, the installation of Chief Sanusi as Okanlomo Oódua is not only a recognition of his personal achievements but also a testament to his enduring contributions to Yoruba unity, culture, and progress.

The two-day ceremony is expected to attract dignitaries, traditional rulers, political leaders, and cultural enthusiasts from across Yorubaland and beyond, marking another landmark chapter in the cultural renaissance of the Yoruba Nation.

The novelty matches is powered by the State Coordinator of PHSO, Oyo State Chapter, Mogaji Igbinsola Sunday Paul . The four invited teams include: Ibadan Selected All Stars, Wesley Ambassadors, Oyo Alaafin Ambassadors and Staff All Stars Football Club .

A Tribute To Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau Kigon Gusau A Transformational Leader For Nigerian Football



Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau stands as a shining example of visionary leadership, integrity, and service in the annals of Nigerian football. Since assuming the mantle of President of the Nigeria Football Federation, he has charted a bold and principled path, one defined by discipline, knowledge, dedication, and a fervent love for the beautiful game.

Under his watch, Nigerian football is being transformed from the grassroots to the highest level

1. A Knowledgeable and Skilled Administrator

Gusau brings to the NFF not only administrative acumen but deep technical insight. With a background in governance and finance, he understands both the structure of institutions and the nuances of football development.

He has shown that he knows exactly what it takes to build a system that nurtures coaches, players, referees, and all actors in the game.

2.One of his most enduring and far-reaching legacies is his revival of coaching education in Nigeria

Under his tenure, two Educator Courses were conducted, ensuring that the next generation of coaches receive training in pedagogy and methodology, for the first ever a CAF "C" course for women was held in Nigeria, empowering female coaches with essential credentials.

He also oversaw two NFF D-License courses, helping coaches at the foundational level to certify and upgrade their skills.

Furthermore, Nigerian football coaches were formally integrated into the CAF Coaching Convention, giving our coaches recognition and alignment with continental standards.

3. Infrastructure and Facilitie.

Gusau understands that dreams must rest on strong foundations. To that end, his administration has embarked on ambitious infrastructure projects

The construction of a players' hostel in Abuja to house all our national teams, boys and girls, is underway, a legacy investment that will serve youth teams for generations.

Alongside the hostel, standard training pitches are being built at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, providing world-class training grounds for youth and senior teams.

These projects are supported by FIFA Forward funds, showing his ability to mobilize international resources for Nigeria's benefit.

4. Strengthening Domestic Football & League Integrity

Under Gusau's leadership, the domestic game has seen serious reinforcement

He has sanitized the Nigerian leagues, working to improve governance, accountability, and professionalism.

Referees have been empowered: they now receive communication tools, better training, and improved welfare.

By prioritizing grassroots development, he is laying a sustainable foundation, his commitment to youth and lower leagues ensures that talent is discovered, nurtured, and celebrated.

He also aligned Nigeria's football calendar with international standards, a huge step toward professionalization.

Moreover, under his watch, the Nigeria National League (NNL) honored him for his support and commitment to domestic football.

5. Transparent Leadership & Integrity

Alhaji Gusau's administration has emphasized accountability and honesty throughout

He set up a zero-tolerance anti-corruption policy, establishing systems to investigate and prevent corrupt practices.

He has pushed for financial transparency budget processes are more open, and resources are managed prudently.

His integrity and humility shine in everything he does. He leads by example, putting service before prestige.

6. Championing National Teams Across All Levels

Gusau's dedication to Nigeria's national teams male and female, youth and senior — is steadfast

He has supported nearly all of Nigeria's national teams, from U-13s up to the Super Eagles, recognizing the importance of depth and continuity.

Under his watch, Nigeria's female age-grade teams have made strides, and women's football has received renewed focus and backing.

He has unified football stakeholders, bridging gaps between the 36 state FAs and the FCT, fostering cooperation rather than division.

7. A Man of Integrity, Simplicity & Compassion

Beyond his professional achievements, Gusau is deeply appreciated for his personal virtues

He is honest: his dealings are marked by openness, and his word is his bond.

He is humble and simple, never seeking the limelight, but always working quietly and effectively.

He is hospitable and generous: he cares deeply for the underprivileged, especially in rural areas, believing in uplifting communities through football.

His philanthropy is more than rhetoric — he genuinely believes in giving back, in helping the needy, and in ensuring that football is accessible to all.

8. Vision for the Future

With Gusau at the helm, Nigerian football is not just dreaming, it is building. His vision is long-term

to leave behind a legacy of world-class facilities, a robust coaching system, a thriving domestic game, and national teams that compete at the highest level with pride and consistency.

He doesn't just promise; he delivers. With every new project, every training course, every investment, he reaffirms his commitment to a stronger, more unified Nigerian football family.

Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gusau is more than a football administrator. He is a servant-leader, a reformer, a builder, and a man of unshakeable integrity. Under his leadership, Nigerian football is being lifted, not just for today, but for the generations to come. We owe him our gratitude, our respect, and our support. With Gusau and his board steering the ship, Nigeria's football destiny is bright in Shá Allah.

GUSAU FOR CONTINUITY,GUSAU DESERVE OUR SUPPORT,GUSAU IS THE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF NIGERIAN,WEST AFRICA AND AFRICAN FOOTBALL.

Like,share and comment to support the man that deserves continuity.

Tuesday 18th November 2025

Gago Ahlan

1 of 12



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NEXT

Osimhen named in final shortlist for 2025 CAF men's player of the year award

Super Eagles striker Victor Osimhen has been named among the final three nominees for the 2025 CAF Men's Player of the Year award, setting up a heavyweight contest against Egypt's Mohamed Salah and Morocco's Achraf Hakimi.

CAF confirmed the top three finalists on their official X (Twitter) page on Sunday, trimming the list from the original 10-man shortlist released in October.

Osimhen's inclusion comes after a phenomenal year on loan at Galatasaray, where he powered the Turkish side to a domestic double. The Nigerian striker was in sensational form, scoring 37 goals and providing seven assists across all competitions.

The 26-year-old has carried that momentum into the new campaign, already netting nine times so far. His six-goal tally in the UEFA Champions League places him at the top of the scoring chart, ahead of Erling Haaland, Kylian Mbappe, and Harry Kane, who each have five.

On the international stage, Osimhen has remained indispensable for Nigeria. He delivered a hat-trick in the Super Eagles' 4–0 win over Benin Republic and struck twice in the 4–1 playoff semifinal victory against DR Congo, keeping the nation's World Cup hopes alive.



Nigeria Coach Eric Chelle Alleges DR Congo Staff Used 'Voodoo' During Penalty Shootout in World Cup Playoff Loss



Nigeria head coach Eric Chelle has sparked controversy after alleging that a staff member of the DR Congo national team engaged in "voodoo" during the tense penalty shootout of Sunday's 2026 World Cup playoff final in Rabat, Morocco.

The Super Eagles were eliminated after a 4–3 penalty defeat, following a 1–1 draw across 120 minutes at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium—a result that means Nigeria will miss the World Cup for the second consecutive edition.

Chelle: "A DR Congo staff member was doing voodoo"

Speaking to journalists after the match, Chelle expressed his irritation over what he described as suspicious repeated gestures from a DR Congo staff member during the VAR review for a penalty incident.

A video posted by ESPN Africa on Monday, Nov. 17, captured the coach saying:

"During all the penalty decision, a guy of Congo did some voodoo… Every time, every time, every time. That is why I was a little nervous after him."

When pressed to clarify what exactly he witnessed, Chelle gestured upward with his hands and added:

"Something like that. I don't know if it's water or something [he was spraying it up]."

The coach did not provide further details, nor did he outright accuse DR Congo of influencing the outcome—but his comments have since fueled widespread debate online.

Background: A high-stakes match with a painful outcome

Nigeria took the lead early in the first half through Frank Onyeka, but DR Congo equalized in the 32nd minute via Mechak Elia. The match remained deadlocked through extra time, eventually proceeding to penalties.

A missed Nigerian kick proved decisive, sending the Leopards of DR Congo to the intercontinental playoffs scheduled for March 2026.

The "voodoo" context

The term voodoo is popularly used in African football to describe any act perceived as ritualistic or spiritual during matches, though it often refers broadly to traditional cultural practices.

Chelle's comments have added a new dimension to Nigeria's heartbreak, with fans and pundits now discussing not only the team's performance but also the atmosphere surrounding the high-pressure encounter.

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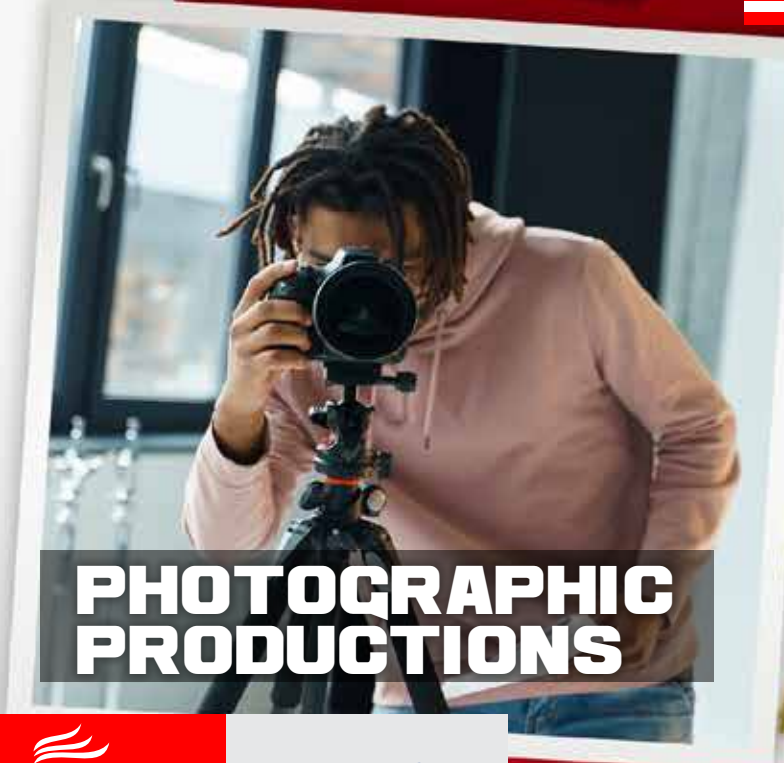
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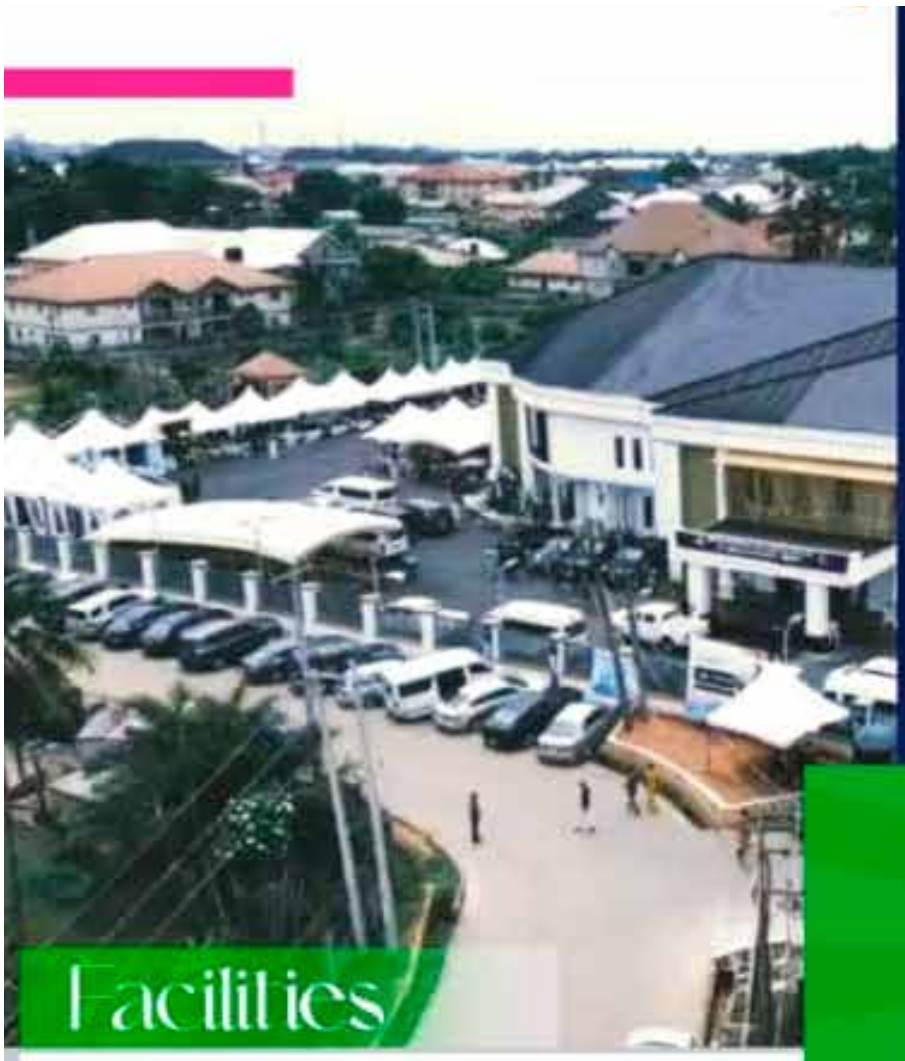
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What exactly went wrong with Ademola Lookman?



The player we once knew, electric, confident, decisive, hasn't looked like himself ever since that entire episode with Atalanta.

When his proposed move away from the club failed to materialize, things reportedly shifted behind the scenes.

The atmosphere around him changed. Instead of reintegrating him smoothly, Atalanta appeared to sideline him, giving him limited involvement and creating a sense of isolation. that kind of treatment can break a player's rhythm, confidence, and mental stability.

And the effect has been painfully visible. Lookman's performances for the Super Eagles during the World Cup qualifiers haven't reflected the standard he set in the past.

This is someone who used to be a spark for us, creating chances, carrying the ball with intent, scoring important goals, and providing assists. now it feels like we're watching a shadow of the real Lookman, a player battling internally rather than expressing himself freely on the pitch.

Whatever happened at Atalanta has clearly taken a toll. when a player doesn't feel valued or supported at the club level, it almost always bleeds into their national team performances. It becomes a mental weight, and you can see that burden every time he touches the ball.

I genuinely feel for him. No player deserves to be stuck in an environment that harms their confidence or mental well-being. For his own good, January might be the perfect moment for him to make a fresh start elsewhere.

He needs a club that trusts him, believes in him, and allows him to flourish again. I sincerely pray he finds his spark back, because right now, he truly hasn't been himself, and it's sad to watch.

Enyimba FC Steps Aside Coach Eguma & His Two Assistants

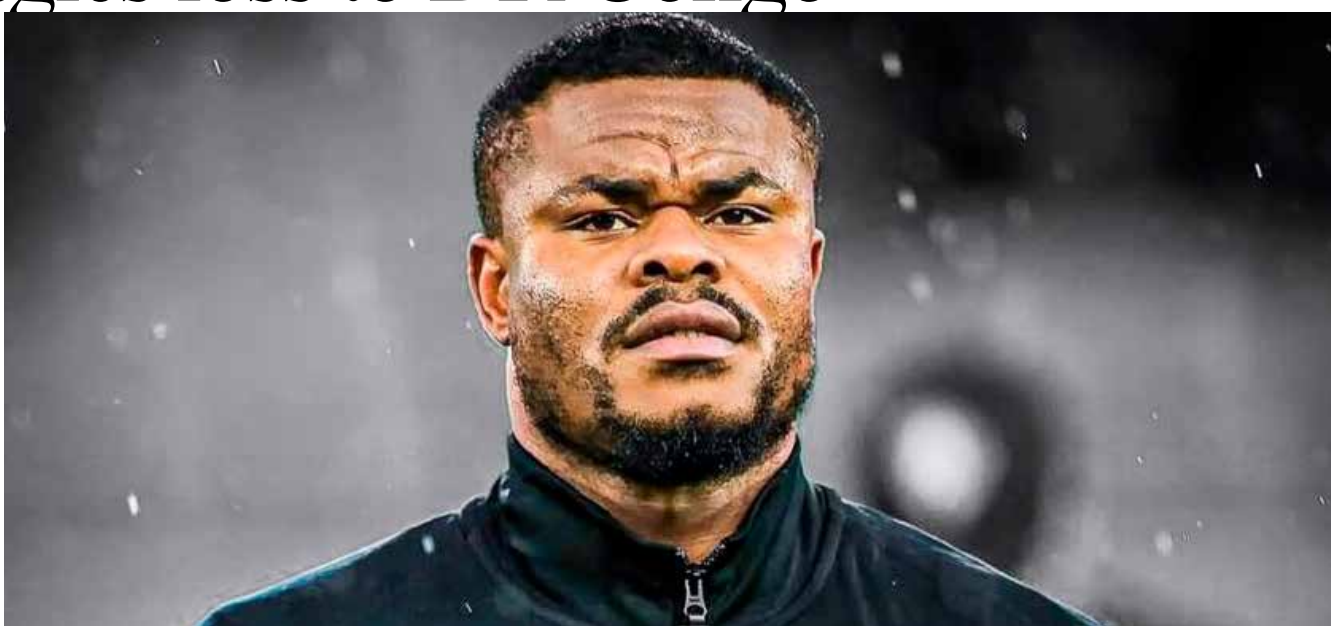


Following a run of poor and unsatisfactory results, the Management of Enyimba FC has approved the stepping aside of the club's Technical Adviser, Coach Stanley Eguma and his two assistants, Ndubuisi Nduka and Joseph Boma till further notice.

The move which is contained in a letter issued to Coach Eguma after an emergency management meeting hours after the disappointing NPFL match day 13 loss to Wikki Tourist FC on Sunday at the Enyimba International Stadium, Aba takes immediate effect.

While the club conducts a thorough review of the poor performance and exploring ways to improve, the management has however asked one of the club's Assistant Coaches, Lawrence Ukaegbu to interimgly take charge of training sessions and preparations ahead of our match day 14 encounter against Katsina United in Jos next Sunday.

'We take full responsibility': Nwabali apologises for Super Eagles loss to DR Congo



Super Eagles goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali has apologised to Nigerians after the team failed to qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, following a dramatic penalty shootout defeat to DR Congo in the CAF playoffs final on Sunday, Bold Sports reports.

Nwabali delivered an impressive performance in Rabat, notably denying a goal-bound header in the final minute of extra time before producing two saves during the shootout. But his heroics were not enough, as DR Congo triumphed 4-3 on penalties to end Nigeria's World Cup hopes.

After the match, the Chippa United goalkeeper took to Instagram to express his disappointment and assume responsibility on behalf of the squad.

"Painful! We all did our best for the badge thought our best wasn't enough. I was once a fan and understand how it feels giving you a disappointing night, we take full responsibility," he wrote on his official page.

Nigeria's World Cup dreams shattered after penalty shootout loss to DR Congo

The Super Eagles' 2026 World Cup dreams have been shattered after a dramatic penalty shootout defeat to DR Congo in the CAF Playoffs final at the Stade Prince Moulay Abdallah on Sunday night.

Nigeria made the perfect start to the contest, taking the lead early on when Zaidu Sanusi's low cross deflected into the path of Frank Onyeka. The Brentford man fired a powerful strike that clipped Arthur Masuaku and sailed into the net, giving the Super Eagles a deserved advantage.

DR Congo nearly responded immediately after Stanley Nwabali failed to gather a set piece cleanly, but the Leopards were unable to pounce. Nigeria continued to create chances, with Wilfred Ndidi's long-range volley forcing a save from Mpazi-Nzau, while an Ademola Lookman cut-back saw Ndidi and Samuel Chukwueze collide inside the box, wasting a promising opening.

The missed opportunities proved costly as the Leopards hit back in the 32nd minute. A swift counter-attack released Cédric Bakambu, who squared for Meschack Elia to calmly slot past Nwabali and level the score. The goal galvanised DR Congo, allowing them to slow Nigeria's momentum and limit clear chances as the first half wore on.

A notable concern emerged in the second half as head coach Eric Chelle withdrew Victor Osimhen for Akor Adams, indicating the Galatasaray striker had picked up a knock. DR Congo started the half brighter and carved out half-chances, while Nigeria's response saw Chidera Ejuke and Moses Simon replace Chukwueze and Lookman. Despite the attacking changes, the Super Eagles struggled for control as the Leopards applied sustained pressure without finding a breakthrough. With neither side able to find a winner, the match moved into extra time, Nigeria's second consecutive 120-minute battle.

DR Congo dominated the first period of extra time but failed to convert their pressure into goals. Nigeria's best chance came against the run of play when Bruno Onyemaechi picked out Tolu Arokodare, but the Wolves forward couldn't apply the finishing touch.

The tension heightened in the second period when DR Congo had a goal ruled out before captain Chancel Mbemba forced a crucial save from Nwabali in the final minutes to take the tie to penalties.

Substitute goalkeeper Timothy Fayulu, introduced just minutes before the shootout, became the hero. The Congo stopper saved two Nigerian spot-kicks to send DR Congo through to the Inter-confederation playoffs, ending the Super Eagles' hopes of reaching the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

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Alisson: Making of a modern goalkeeper

BY OGAH OCHECHE

Alisson Ramses Becker, known universally as Alisson, is a Brazilian professional footballer whose career trajectory mirrors the evolution of the modern goalkeeper. Born on October 2, 1992, in Novo Hamburgo, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, Alisson's journey from the youth academy of Sport Club Internacional to the heights of European club football with A.S. Roma and Liverpool F.C., and his role as Brazil's undisputed number one, establishes him as one of the most influential players of his generation. His success is not merely defined by the saves he makes, but by his commanding presence, exceptional distribution skills, and remarkable composure under pressure, attributes that have redefined the expectations for those guarding the goal.

Alisson's path to professional football was influenced by a strong family connection to the game; his older brother, Muriel Gustavo Becker, also pursued a career as a goalkeeper. Alisson joined the youth ranks of Sport Club Internacional in 2002 at the age of ten, where he spent over a decade honing his craft. His early years were marked by consistent progression through the age groups, though his physical development was initially slower than that of his peers. He eventually grew to his formidable height of 1.93 meters (6 ft 4 in), which complements his athleticism and commanding reach.

His senior career at Internacional officially began in 2013, making his debut on February 17, 2013, in the Campeonato Gaúcho championship. His initial seasons saw him compete for playing time, notably against his own brother, Muriel, and later against the legendary Brazilian veteran, Dida. This period of intense competition proved vital, forcing Alisson to push his limits and consolidate his position as the first-choice keeper. By 2015, he had established himself as an undisputed starter, making 57 appearances across all competitions in that calendar year.

During his four seasons with Internacional's senior side, Alisson made over 100 appearances and contributed to the club's consistent domestic success, winning the Campeonato Gaúcho state championship in four consecutive seasons from 2013 to 2016. On the international front, he represented Brazil at the youth level before earning his first senior international call-up in 2015. His performances in Brazil had clearly alerted European scouts, culminating in a pre-contract agreement with Italian Serie A club A.S. Roma in February 2016. His final appearance for Internacional came on May 15, 2016, a clean sheet against Chapecoense, marking the end of his formative chapter in South America.

Alisson completed his move to Roma in July 2016 for a reported fee of €7.5 million. His transition to European football was managed with patience, spending his entire first season, 2016–2017, largely as an understudy to the Polish international Wojciech Szczęsny. During this period, Alisson gained vital experience in European cup competitions, including the UEFA Champions League qualifiers and the Europa League, making 15 appearances in total, though none in the league itself. This acclimatization year was crucial, allowing him to adapt to the tactical and physical demands of Serie A without the immediate pressure of being the club's number one choice.

The 2017–2018 season proved to be his breakthrough campaign. Following Szczęsny's departure to Juventus, Alisson seized the opportunity to become Roma's undisputed first-choice goalkeeper. He immediately made an impact in Serie A, starting in the season opener and delivering a series of exceptional performances throughout the year. It was in the UEFA Champions League that Alisson truly announced himself on the global stage. He was a pivotal figure in Roma's remarkable run to the semi-finals, keeping five clean sheets in 12 matches, including two against a heavily favoured Barcelona side as Roma achieved a stunning comeback from a three-goal deficit in the quarter-finals. His form was widely recognized, earning him the Serie A Goalkeeper of the Year award for the 2017–2018 season and placing him firmly among the elite goalkeepers in Europe. His combination of shot-stopping heroics and brilliant command of his penalty area made him one of the most sought-after players in the summer transfer window of 2018.

Alisson's career reached its zenith with his transfer to Liverpool F.C. in July 2018. The move was a statement of intent from the English club, who paid a then-world record fee for a goalkeeper, reported to be €72.5 million (£66.8 million). The signing proved instantly transformative for Liverpool under manager Jürgen Klopp, providing the reliable, world-class presence between the posts that the team desperately needed.

His debut season, 2018–2019, was nothing short of spectacular. Alisson integrated seamlessly into the high-pressing, high defensive line system, acting not just as a shot-stopper but as a "sweeper-keeper" and the starting point of attacks. His distribution accuracy and long-range passing provided a critical outlet for Liverpool's fast breaks. He played every minute of the Premier League campaign, recording a club-record 21 clean sheets, which earned him the prestigious Premier League Golden Glove award.

Crucially, his interventions were often spectacular and decisive. A memorable moment came in the final group stage match of the UEFA Champions League against Napoli, where his injury-time save from Arkadiusz Milik prevented a goal that would have eliminated Liverpool from the competition. Liverpool went on to win the tournament, defeating Tottenham Hotspur 2–0 in the final, with Alisson making eight saves, the most by a goalkeeper in a Champions League final clean sheet performance.

His outstanding calendar year was capped by winning The Best FIFA Goalkeeper award, the Yashin Trophy, and the IFFHS World's Best Goalkeeper award, all in 2019, cementing his status as the best goalkeeper on the planet.

The following season, 2019–2020, saw Alisson provide the backbone for Liverpool's historic Premier League title victory, their first league championship in 30 years. His consistency was vital, and his trophy haul also included the UEFA Super Cup and the FIFA Club World Cup, confirming Liverpool's status as a global powerhouse.

The Unforgettable Goal

One of the most extraordinary moments of Alisson's career occurred in the 2020–2021 season. On May 16, 2021, in a crucial league match against West Bromwich Albion, with Liverpool trailing 1–0 and desperately needing a win to boost their Champions League qualification hopes, Alisson made the unprecedented decision to charge into the opposition's box for a last-minute corner kick. In the 95th minute, he rose to meet the cross with a perfectly executed header, scoring the winning goal. This moment was not just historically significant—it was the first goal ever scored by a goalkeeper for Liverpool in the club's 129-year history and only the sixth time a goalkeeper had scored in the Premier League—but it also proved instrumental in securing Liverpool's top-four finish, highlighting his unique competitive drive and unexpected scoring ability. The goal was rightfully named Liverpool's Goal of the Season for 2020–2021.

International Glory with Brazil

Parallel to his club achievements, Alisson established himself as the undisputed number one for the Brazilian national team, the Seleção. His senior international debut came in 2015, and he quickly displaced established goalkeepers to secure the starting spot. He represented Brazil at the Copa América Centenario in 2016 and was the starting keeper at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, where Brazil reached the quarter-finals.

His crowning achievement with Brazil came in the 2019 Copa América, hosted on home soil. Alisson delivered a masterclass in goalkeeping, conceding only a single goal throughout the entire tournament—a penalty kick in the 3–1 final victory against Peru. He kept five clean sheets and played a vital role in Brazil lifting the trophy, which earned him the Copa América Golden Glove award and a spot in the Team of the Tournament. He has continued to represent Brazil at subsequent major tournaments, including the 2022 FIFA World Cup, where they reached the quarter-finals, and the 2024 Copa América. As of late 2025, Alisson has earned 76 caps for his country.

Style of Play and Legacy

Alisson's playing style embodies the pinnacle of the modern goalkeeper archetype. His game is defined by three key areas:

Shot-Stopping Excellence: While proficient in handling routine shots, his true genius lies in his ability to make instinctual, match-winning saves from close range. His agility and size allow him to cover the goal effectively, and his positioning is almost always impeccable, reducing the need for acrobatic, recovery saves.

Sweeper-Keeper Role: He is a proactive presence outside the penalty area, consistently sweeping up long balls played over the high defensive line. His reading of the game allows him to anticipate danger and clear the ball before the opposition can capitalize, providing an essential layer of protection for his defence.

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