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LOCAL FOOTBALL
BREAKS
NEW GROUND

WALTER'S KNOWLEDGE DREAM FULFILLED

BILLIAT:
IT'S NOT EASY TO PLAY FOR SCOTTLAND

GREEN HOME FORM FUELS GREENFUEL

MUTATU, DYNAMOS AT CROSSROADS

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Editor's Note

I am really excited to present to you the second injection of our weekly Soccer Magazine dosage. The feedback including constructive criticism we got from the first publication will always inspire us to continue refining your product. We are determined to cover every blade of grass just to give you what you deserve—football news.

We continue to beef up our editorial staff with the tried and tested gurus now part of the desk and be rest assured to continue receiving quality football commentary, analysis and investigative pieces from the team. Our local soccer has gained a lot in terms of financial capacity and the influx of foreigners can confirm to that. And we can only help it out by getting involved as well.

We have packaged some outside-the-box features, analysis and in-depth pieces for your consumption. For all your feedback, don't hesitate to send a text on Whatsapp Number 0773809407.It's not our product, it's yours.

Ride on.



Tadious Manyepo

Local football breaks new ground

- US$1million spent on transfers
- 18 foreigners join PSL clubs
- Players averaging US$1k in salaries

Staff Reporter

After years of losing its lustre and appeal, domestic football has regained its vibe and mojo. The last decade has especially been cruel to the local game with interest in it fading by the day. Several clubs like Mushowani Stars collapsed along the way due to liquidity challenges. With meagre salaries at the majority of teams across the league, most talented players have been shunning the game. As a result, most Premiership clubs also struggled to attract any foreigners. But there is a new positive wave sweeping the scene. The emergence of well-to-do clubs like Scottland, Simba Bhora, Telone, Greenfuel, Herentals and Manica Diamonds has changed the perception. Football is flourishing again and the players are earning decently. The stadiums are once again filling and all is looking well. For the first time since the turn of the century, 18 players from beyond Zimbabwe's borders have joined Premiership clubs. They are not mickey mouse stuff with a good number of them playing for their respective national teams including Malawi and Namibia.



Scott Sakupwanya

Local clubs have also spent about US$1million collectively, for the first time in years as well, in signing new players in the current window.

Flamboyant side Scottland led the way, scooping more than 25 new players on an average sign-on fee rate of US$14 500. Telone have also done significantly well including giving some of their high-profile signings houses in Gweru.

Salaries and winning bonuses have significantly increased as well with clubs paying an average of US$350 to each of the players in winning bonuses. That means every player in the league can potentially gross over US$1000 per month.
The league is only two matches old but the life and competitiveness in the games are telling.

Scottland president Pedzai "Scott" Sakupwanya said his team's knack to give value to players has awakened other clubs in a positive manner.
"I am very happy that the coming in of Scottland in the Premier Soccer League has changed a lot of things in a positive manner.

"We want to see players getting money and they can in turn give their all thereby giving value to the game of football," said Sakupwanya. "I am very happy to see other teams doing a lot in terms of rewarding their players too."

Sports Leaders Institute of Zimbabwe president Russel Maradza Mhiribidi hailed the new wave and predicted an exciting 2025 season. "As SLIZ, we are very happy to see Premier Soccer League clubs putting a player-first policy. This will improve the quality of our football as a country and this will also cascade down through the lower divisions," said Mhiribidi.

GREEN HOME FORM FUELS GREENFUEL



Staff Writer

Greenfuel chairman Fredson Moyo has only one wish. He wants to see his team converting the too many home draws into wins. That will put the Chisumbanje outfit in the championship matrix rather than the other end. If anything, the Lowveld team could have been relegated last year but their home form stood firm. They are the only team that completed the whole marathon without tasting defeat in front of their fans.

The Greenfuel Arena is currently the most difficult ground for away teams in the league. For good measure, since the opening of this ground on September 23, 2023, Greenfuel lost all the points just once when losing 3-0 to Simba Bhora in their second home outing on September 16, 2023.

Since then, they have won 10 times while drawing on 14 occasions including their 1-1 draw against CAPS United in the opening weekend of the current season.

"I just wish to see the draws being converted to victories. Just look at where we were last year and where we would have been had we managed to win seven out of our nine drawn games. "Those are the little margins which we need to closely monitor and get to polish up," said Moyo.

"I am very impressed with how we play at home. We have now played 25 games at home and only lost once. It's a good return but we have to do more in trying to win all the games we are posting draws.

"We also have to win and play well away from home. I would like to salute our fans who are always at the Greenfuel Arena to back the boys. That really pushes the boys and it's a huge factor behind the record."

Greenfuel have been in the league since 2023 and have not quite established themselves since they have, in one way or the other, always battled relegation demons. But Moyo said the 2025 term will be different especially after they invested a lot in acquiring some profiled players like former Dynamos and CAPS United star Ronald "Rooney" Chitiyo who won the title with both giants as well as Marlon Mushonga, a 2023 champion with Ngezi Platinum Stars among others.



Billiat:

It's not easy to play for Scottland

Staff Reporter

Scottland star Khama Billiat has acknowledged the pressure that comes with playing for "Mabviravira". The Warriors talisman switched from Yadah at the beginning of the year in a headline move that vibrated across the local football divide. He is rubbing shoulders with other respected stars of the game at the same team like Lynoth Chikuhwa, Walter Musona, Peter Muduhwa, Godknows Murwira and Mthokozisi Msebe among others. And a lot is expected from the star-studded team which has had a flying start to life in the top-flight.

The former Kaizer Chiefs and Mamelodi Sundowns mainstay debuted for the Mabvuku side when they beat CAPS United 2-0 at Rufaro in the second week of the season last Saturday.
But the victory wasn't without bruises. And Billiat knows it will be a long season for them given the weight of expectations they are carrying on their shoulders. He said every game that Scottland will play will be like a cup final because every team wants to beat them.

"To be honest, it's not easy playing for Scottland. Everyone wants to beat us, and every game is going to be a final for us and it's going to be very challenging," Billiat said.

"So it demands a lot from us to stay on our best. And it's not easy. The least you can do is to give your all every game. You know, you're going to play well every time, to contribute, to leave everything on the pitch, to fight for the team, to give everything you can."

He said Scottland have the quality to pull through as competition in the league hots-up. "We have got a lot of quality in the ranks. You are in and you are also out at times. Others come in and do well, the game is even much better like we have shown in these initial stages of the race. So yeah, you just want to give credit to everyone who is here."
Scottland, without any doubt, are one of the favourites to clinch this year's league title, but, like Billiat said, it will take a great deal of effort and consistence.

"To be honest, it's not easy playing for Scottland. Everyone wants to beat us, and every game is going to be a final for us and it's going to be very challenging

How football dragged **Mupandawana** from Children's Home to the Airforce

Staff Writer

LEANA MUPANDAWANA is putting in a lot of work at training as she tries to get her mojo back. The Chapungu Queens midfielder missed the entire 2024 Women Premier Soccer League season as she was undergoing training in the Airforce of Zimbabwe. Before that, the agile midfielder was a huge cog for Chapungu Queens helping them attain top-four finishes in both 2022 and 2023 terms. She could have opted to go for military training between those years, but she had no requisite Ordinary Level qualifications to jump into that ship.



Instead, Mupandawana had to go through the "O" Level mill at Manyame Secondary School to first attain the requirement. She did just that and proceeded for training.

"I can't believe it's actually me who has just finished training and has become a regular member of the Airforce of Zimbabwe," said Mupandawana. "God is amazing. I am very humbled and short of words to say anything at the moment. I am happy."

Mupandawana knows it could have been worse. She was raised at a Children's Home in Gweru. She wasn't too bright at school. She loved football, but there was no female football at both primary and secondary schools she attended.

But the Midlands Children's Hope superintendent Lenzeni Ndete-Kamwendo made sure the game was played at the home for entertainment purposes.
Mupandawana never took it as such and always wanted to take her game to the next level. In 2020 while the country was on a standstill owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, Chapungu Queens called for trials and Mupandawana came across the flier on her smart phone. She duly attended and passed the audition.

"That was to be the beginning of this journey," she recounts. "My mother (Ndete-Kamwendo) was so supportive. She sourced for bus-fare for me to travel to and from Harare.

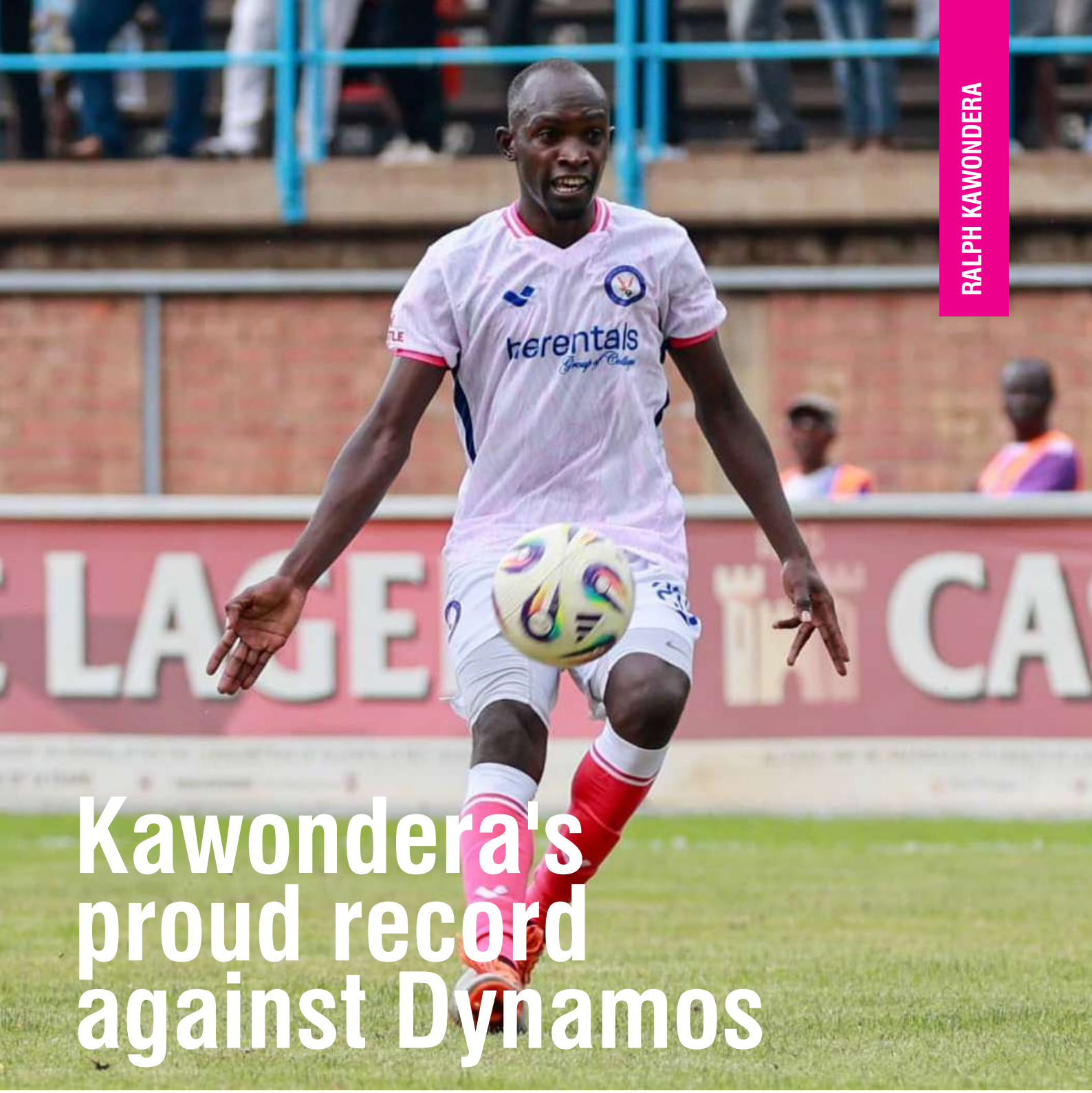
"So I went there with one thing in my mind; to pass the trials. I did that and the next thing, the Chapungu Queens authorities led by manager Talent Chitsaka facilitated for me to get a scholarship at Manyame Secondary School after they had learnt about my background.

"I had indicated to them that I was willing to go to school while playing football. So there I was, playing the game in the league while also going to school. "I took both worlds seriously trying to strike a balance in terms of my attention. I was playing the game week-in and week-out at the same time improving academically.

"I managed to pass my Ordinary Levels, managing to do well in all the eight subjects that I sat for in the exam. "It is the achievement that then allowed me to join the force. So last year, I was concentrating on training which I then managed to complete."

Mupandawana said she can now fully focus on her game and has set her sights on playing for the national team.

At only 19, Mupandawana can be a huge player for the Young Mighty Warriors who are scheduled to take part in the Cosafa tournament this year and has all the makings as well to become a huge part in the Mighty Warriors squad, if she manages to regain her touch.



Kawondera's proud record against Dynamos

Staff Reporter

Some things are just not meant to be. Dynamos are still wondering how they failed to beat Herentals in their second match-day at Rufaro last Saturday. Thrice, the upright stood between them and a goal, which would otherwise turned out to be the winner in a tie that eventually ended in a goalless draw.

The Glamour Boys have themselves struggled to beat The Students since the latter's promotion into the top-flight seven years ago. But in instances where they weaved such obvious chances, DeMbare have managed to collect the maximum points. However, last Saturday was a totally different day.

Dynamos played better than Herentals. They had most of the ball. They were in line to score more times than The Students. They dominated every other aspect and stat. But they never got to get a goal.

Maybe they are never meant to win a game in which one of their former players Ralph Kawondera is lining-up from the opposite end.

The utility has an intact record over the Glamour Boys over the past eight years. The only time he ended in a losing end when facing Dynamos was back in July 2017 when DeMbare beat Triangle 2-1 at Rufaro.

Kawondera has never lost against the Glamour Boys ever since. He has lined-up for Triangle, FC Platinum and CAPS United in-between and is still to taste defeat against them.

The towering player has scored five goals against the Harare giants in 11 games since that defeat in 2017. He has however played for them for two years between 2022 and 2023. “I am proud of that record and stat,” said Kawondera. “I have always found a way to get a win or draw against Dynamos since 2017. It's something that I always look at and smile.”

DID YOU KNOW?



1

Only FIVE players have played for all the traditional biggest teams in Zimbabwe which include Dynamos, CAPS United and Highlanders. The players are Lovemore "Magents" Ncube, Stewart "Shutto" Murisa, Valentine Ndaba, Newman Sianchali and Rodrick Mutuma. Please Note: Goalkeeper Munyaradzi Diya played for Dynamos and Highlanders before moving to CAPS United but never got to play for the Green Machine.

2

Tafadzwa "Fire" Rusike was nicknamed Makanaka in 2007 on his CAPS United debut against Masvingo United after he serenaded before an appreciative CAPS United crowd at Rufaro. It was during the same period when another youngster Makanaka Wakatama was doing wonders on national television.

3

CAPS United are the ONLY club in the country to have accumulated 79 points in a single season in the history of the Premier Soccer League including the modern system which has up to 18 clubs. Makepekepe attained the feat in 2004 after losing only one game when the league still had only 16 teams.

4

The late David George remains the only technical personnel to reach both the CAF Champions League semi-final and final. He was assistant to Sunday Chidzambwa when Dynamos reached the final in 1998 and retained the same capacity, deputizing the late David Mandigora when DeMbare reached the semi-finals in 2008.

5

Former Dynamos goalkeeper Gift "Umbro" Muzadzi almost signed for Highlanders before he decided to walk out of the arrangement.



Mutatu, Dynamos at crossroads

by Curtworth Masango

The marriage has barely started. Yet it's heading for a divorce. Dynamos' crown-messiah in the attacking third Farai Mutatu hasn't yet been registered amid doubts over his ability to carry the Glamour Boys on his 25-year-old shoulders. He never played competitive football over the past year. But his arrival at DeMbare in January was met with optimism given his profile as he has seen action at iconic United States of America clubs like Los Angeles Galaxy.

He is currently on the treatment table and that has only compounded matters. But his level seems not to have convinced the Dynamos technical team led by Lloyd "Mablanyo" Chigowe. The Harare giants have now elected to remain in the market, combing for a striker to provide possible answers to their goal-scoring problems. DeMbare have failed to score in their opening two games of the season.

"We are still looking for another striker before the window closes," Chigowe said. "We need a guy who can work for the group and improve the team as a whole. "There is a level at the club that is expected for everyone, and it's unfortunate that not every player is at that level for one reason or another. Mutatu (Farai) is one of the players in our books, but he is injured. There is still a possibility that we will register him or not."

Chigowe said they are prepared to change their own narrative on Saturday's match against TelOne, warning that no team in the league can be taken lightly. "Any team can provide a rude awakening to the so-called giants, and we have to be prepared. They will be seeking to make a name for themselves," Chigowe said. Dynamos' lack of firepower has been a major concern, and pressure is mounting on Chigowe and his technical team to deliver results.

"We are positive everything will go our way, and every piece will come in its place," said Chigowe.

We are still looking for another striker before the window closes, Chigowe said. We need a guy who can work for the group and improve the team as a whole.

PSL Match Day 3 Fixtures

Friday 14 March 2024
Scottland v Ngezi Platinum Stars (Rufaro)

Saturday 15 March 2024
Simba Bhora v Herentals (Wadzanai)
Dynamos v Telone (Rufaro)
Chicken Inn v FC Platinum (Luveve)
MWOS v Yadah (Baobab)
Kwekwe United v Bikita Minerals (Bata)
Greenfuel v Highlanders (Greenfuel Arena)

Sunday 16 March 2026
Manica Diamonds v ZPC Kariba (Sakubva)
Triangle v CAPS United (Greenfuel Arena)

2025 Castle Lager Premier Soccer League stats after Match Day 2

Goals

3 Brighton Ncube - Highlanders, 2 Washington Navaya-Telone, 1 Prince Chama - Herentals, 1 Kundai Sangare-Herentals, 1 Malvin Gaki—Ngezi Platinum, 1Tymon Machope - Scottland, 1 Sadney Urikhob - Scottland, 1 Fortune Binzi -Manica Diamonds, 1 Salif Cheya - Mwos, 1 Billy Veremu - Mwos, 1 Tinashe Ruzive - Bikita Minerals, 1 Masimba Mambare - Kwekwe United, 1 Ashwin Karengesha -Ngezi Platinum, 1 Perfect Chikwende - Greenfuel, 1 Jayden Bakare -Caps United, 1 Melikhaya Ncube - Highlanders, 1 Tawanda Macheke - Telone, 1 Blessing Sahondo - Telone, 1 Bruno Mtigo - Telone, OG Blessing Chiota (Triangle) vs Scottland

Assists

2. McKinnon Mushore, 1 Michael Tapera - Scottland, 1 Innocent Masiiwa - Bikita Minerals, 1 Albert Manenji Scottland, 1. Sahondo Blessing - Telone, 1 Bruno Mtigo - Telone, 1 Govera Powell - Telone, 1 Khama Billiat Scottland, 1 Eric Dombo -Herentals, 1 Clemence Gobvu - Herentals, 1 Gerald Bero - Telone, 1 Anelka Chivandire - Manica Diamonds, 1 Allan Gahadzikwa - Kwekwe United, 1 Qdir Amin - Ngezi Platinum, 1 Ronald Chitiyo - Greenfuel, 1 Tanaka Shandirwa - Caps United

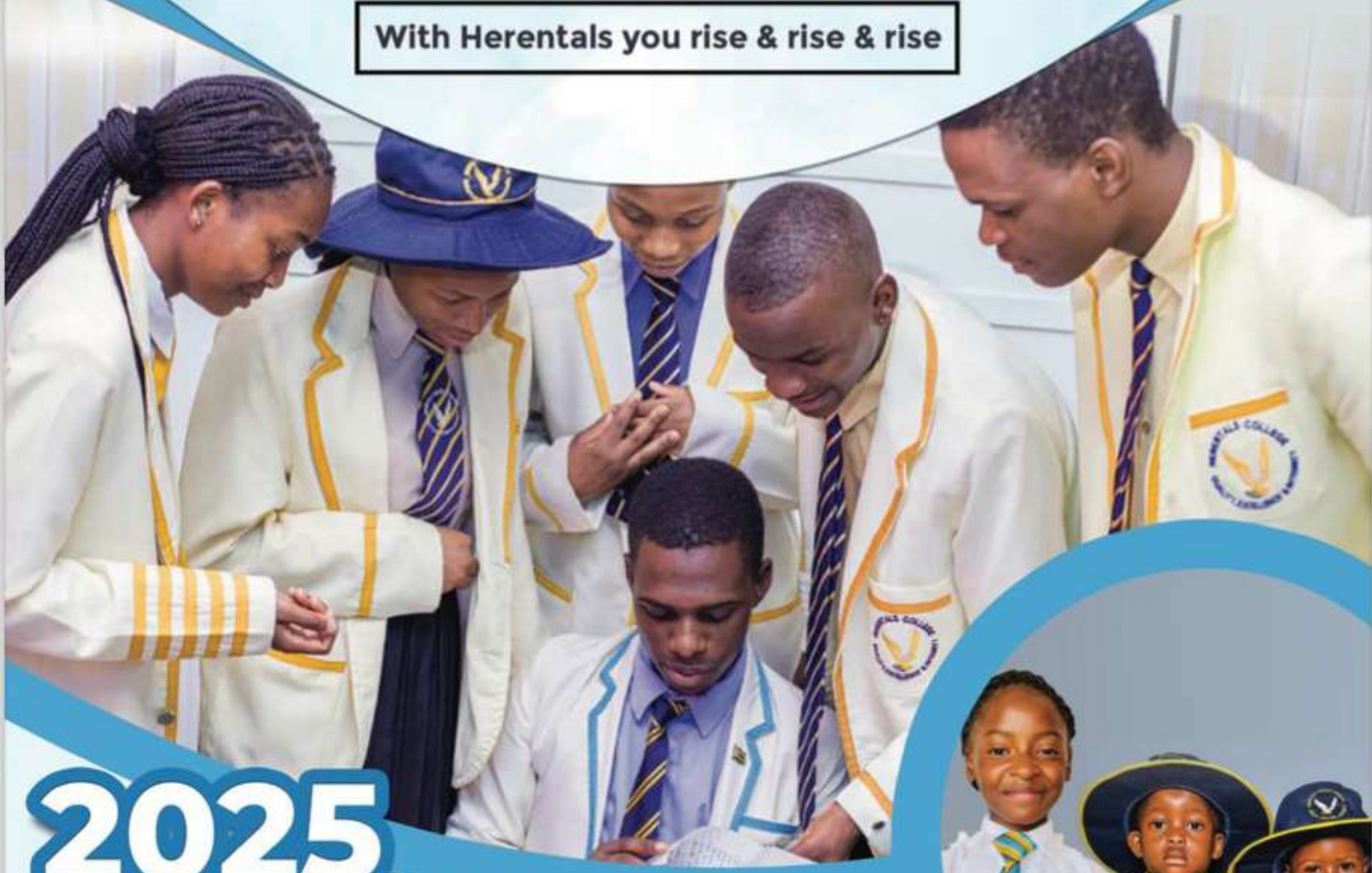
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AWAY

NIGERIA VS ZIMBABWE

25 MARCH 2025 • UYO, NIGERIA

GOALKEEPERS: Washington Arubi (Marumo Gallants), Marley Tavaziva (Brentford), Martin Mapisa (MWOS FC)
DEFENDERS: Jordan Zemura (Udinese), Divine Lunga (Sundowns), Gerald Takwara (Al Minaa SC), Munashe Garananga (FC Copenhagen, ISheanes Mauchi (Simba Bhora), Peter Muduhwa (Scottland), Godknows Murwira (Scottland), Emmanuel Jalai (Dynamos)
MIDFIELDERS: Marshall Munetsi (Wolves), Andy Rinomhota (Cardiff City), Marvelous Nakamba (Luton Town), Mihood), Tawanda Chirewa (Hudders filli Tscottand), Knowledge Musona (Al-Okhdood), Tawanda Chirewa (Huddersfield Town)
FORWARDS: Prince Dube (Young Africans), Tawanda Maswanhise (Motherwell), Terrence Dzvukamanja (Supersport United), Tymon Machope (Scottland), Walter Musona (Scottland)

Warriors to depart for Durban this Sunday The local contingent of the Warriors will leave for Durban, South Africa on Sunday. Zimbabwe host Benin at the Moses Mabida Stadium in a 2026 World Cup qualifier on Thursday next week. They will then connect to Uyo, Nigeria for a date against the Super Eagles five days later.

Maswera
out to smash own scoring record



He was ruthless in front of goal, hitting the net every 98 minutes as he scored a record 29 times for "Chinhu Chedu".



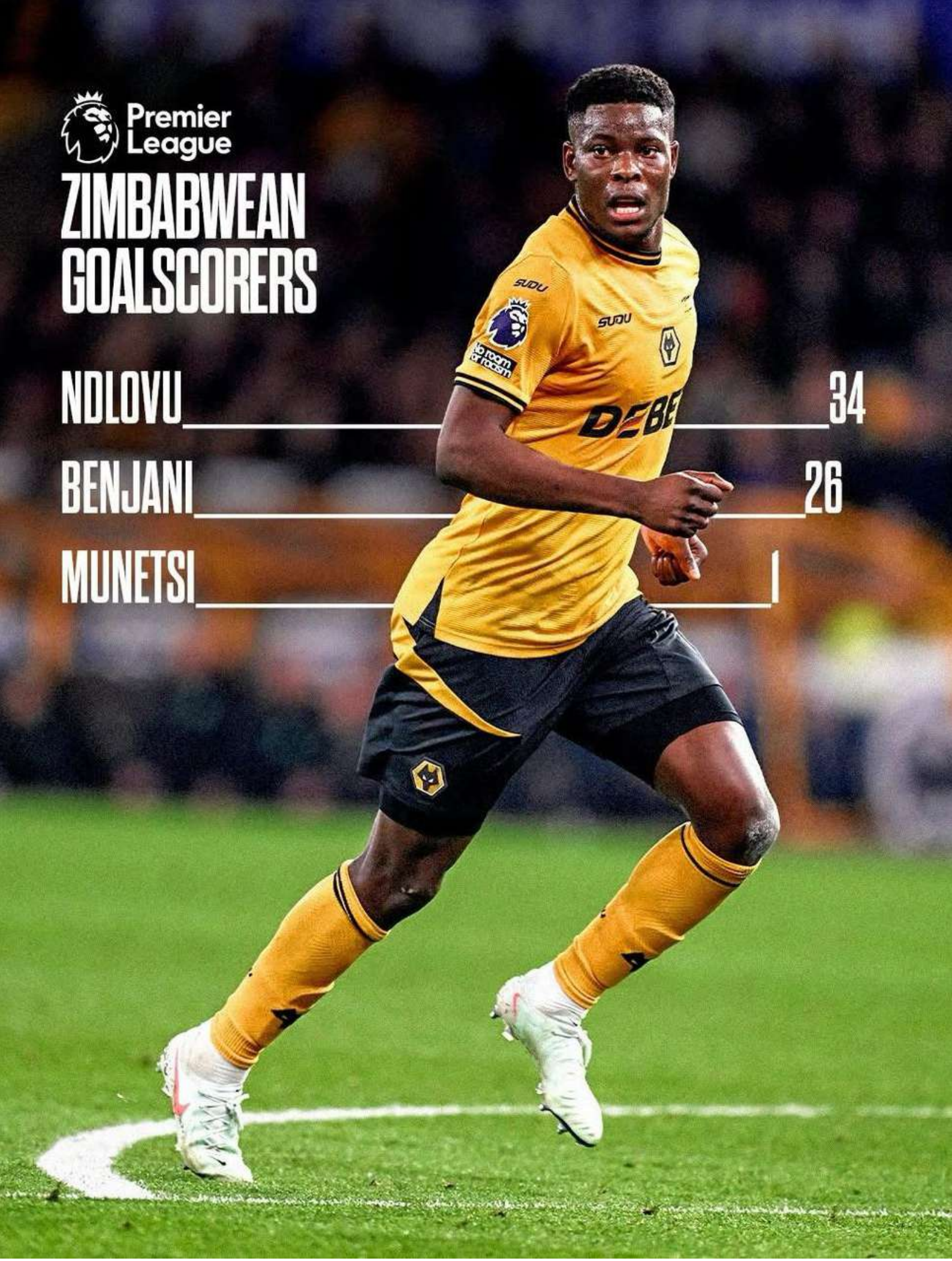
Staff Writer

Tinashe "Maswera" Balakasi has once again found himself central to yet another ambitious Northern Region Soccer League project. The lanky forward was the kingpin in Simba Bhora's successful quest for Premiership promotion three years ago. He was ruthless in front of goal, hitting the net every 98 minutes as he scored a record 29 times for "Chinhu Chedu". No player has ever clipped such numbers in the division and Balakasi deservedly went on to win the Soccer Star of the Year accolade for that particular season.

Some brief stints with Simba Bhora in the Premiership and at Orapa United in the Botswana top-flight followed. But the deadly gunslinger is back in the NRSL where fireworks are expected in the upcoming season. He has penned a deal with Mt Darwin-based Agama (Sporting Eagles) who have themselves set sights on winning the championship having finished in a respectable sixth place in their debut NRSL term last year. Balakasi admits that he didn't expect to leave Simba Bhora but is now relishing the opportunity to help out his new employers win the title. He also has in mind his 29-goal record which he feels can be eclipsed by the owner himself.

"Joining Agama wasn't something I was expecting after coming back for pre-season with Simba Bhora but that's how football life is."But all the same, I am happy to be at my new club where I wish to make a huge statement like I did with Simba Bhora in the 2022 NRSL season," said Balakasi. "A lot is expected from me after joining Agama (Sporting Eagles). They have faith and belief in me that I can bring PSL in Mount Darwin come end of year."I do acknowledge the pressure that comes with that.

Also, I am the holder of the scoring record in the league. I want to surpass that this season."Balakasi does know both the title and another record-smashing goal haul will not come on a silver platter. The NRSL is unpredictable and the competition is always boiling."This is a competitive league and as a team, we ought to play well to be able to win the title."At the end of the day, it all comes down to how we apply ourselves in the field of play."


Premier League
ZIMBABWEAN GOALSCORERS
NDLOVU 34
BENJANI 26
MUNETSI 1

CASTLE LAGER PREMIER SOCCER LEAGUE

Premier Soccer League Player Of The Week

BRIGHTON "MANINJA" NCUBE

Club HIGHLANDERS



Dim Lights at Shine Shine Queens

By Veronica Gwaze

A new Eastern Region Division One season beckons and teams are already busy with their preseason training. An excitement, felt in a telephone conversation, is detectable amongst the clubs who are ready to compete for the top spot in the region. However, one team, Shine-shine Queens is yet to ascertain their fate this year as financial constraints have become their perennial visitor. At some point, precisely 2023 they even made it to the Zimbabwe Women Soccer League after earning promotion in 2022.

Yet the financially hamstrung Masvingo based side even failed to complete their season, having to be ejected from the elite league after a number of walkovers."Financial struggles are troubling us, we do not have sponsorship so we still have not yet started our pre-season," said head coach Mavesere Takaendesa. "I am stressed because I do not know how we are going to manage the season, disbanding the team is not an option."When I assembled this team, it was a way of rescuing the girls from early marriages and unwanted pregnancies so I cannot let them down now."

For the few dollars that the club has in its coffers, the team have been doing menial jobs. The ongoing rain season which has led to a higher demand for labor in the fields by farmers has thrown a lifeline for the team. Coach Takaendesa and his team do menial jobs in farms for a charge. Just like their name, Shine-shine is indeed a special group of female footballers who have not let poverty stop their love for the beautiful game of football. In the face of societal immoralities, football has proved to be a savior for this particular group of girls.

But without sponsorship, they have to find ways to raise funds for their dreams to stay alive. To fulfil their fixtures, purchase kits, transport, and cover other expenses, the young girls, who play in the Eastern Region Division One League, depend on menial jobs. They are either doing odd jobs on farms or they are hired to do laundry and cleaning for Masvingo residents for a fee.

With some of these young girls still in school, it means that their colleagues who



do not have educational commitments go to do the jobs during the week. It is only on weekends and school holidays that the school-going group can join them. In a good week, the girls can raise at least US$60, while sometimes it is way below that. Unlike most parents who are against their children taking up sports, their (Shine-shine) parents are very supportive.

Oftentimes, they join the team to work and raise resources for the club. The game has also proved a safe haven for the girls in an era in which marriages, drug and substance abuse have been prevalent and afflicting most communities."Football has become a source of life and a safe space for them, so we are doing this to keep their dreams alive," said coach Takaendesa. "We are trying to rescue the girls from societal ills, and I am grateful that we share the same vision; hence, taking up these menial jobs is not a problem for them."

During their time in the women's elite league, it was easy to spot them. The team cut a sad image of visibly dejected girls shabbily dressed in oversized navy-blue kit and worn-out boots. Others would play in old and discolored sneakers, eerily depicting their quiet and disadvantaged life. Their body language spoke of a team that felt that they did not belong in the league, and their characters almost bordered on timidity and insecurity.

Each time they had an away assignment, the team would quickly vanish from the match venue to avoid being ridiculed by some fans who made a mockery of their troubles."It was not easy; we were a laughing stock, and some of the spiteful comments fell straight into our ears," recalls Takaendesa. "I am glad that despite all these challenges, the girls remained resolute; unfortunately, financial challenges outweighed us, and we are now back in Division One.

"Imagine going for a game packed like sardine tins all the way from Masvingo to Harare… huge challenges at a time when we were supposed to celebrate finally making it into top-flight."We would be late for some of our games, so the team would not get time to rest…It was a bad experience that I barely wish to talk about."

To fulfil their fixtures, the coaches had to contribute for their team or go into debt. The situation was sometimes so dire that a player's relative had to provide the team with overnight accommodation and breakfast at her residence in Harare. That season, Shine-shine had the league's youngest player, Pretty Mbwende, who was a Chikato Primary School Grade Seven learner. His wish is to have Shine shine back in topflight once again; but this can only happen with some financial support

A revolution benefiting Zimbabwean football



By Langton Nyakwenda

RECOGNIZED as one of the best goalkeepers to emerge from Hwange, Witness Munkuli has an interesting history. He inspired a football revolution in the coal mining town. Munkuli was one of the first goalkeepers to move out of the Colliery in search of greener pastures elsewhere. After starring for Hwange at the turn of the new millennium, Munkuli moved to CAPS United in 2003, the same time Chenjerai Dube also joined Highlanders from Chipangano.

Since then, Munkuli has witnessed a number of shot stoppers sprout from the coal mining town over the years. Before him, there were scores of brilliant keepers who were produced in Hwange, but most of them spent the rest of their careers confined in the Colliery. The legendary Posani Sibanda (late), was the national team keeper in the 1970s and was part of the famous Hwange side which stunned a George Shaya-led Dynamos to win the 1973 Castle Cup. After him came the likes of Weekly Mwale, Isaac Tshuma, Peter Mlilo, Johannes Tshuma and his son Timothy.

Marvelous Nakamba's father, Antony, is also a former Hwange keeper, who also chose stay put in the mining town. However, post 2003, a new trend emerged. Hwange began to export keepers to other regions in the country. And many Premier Soccer League clubs have benefited from this conveyor belt. Petros Mhari moved to FC Platinum where he won four straight league titles. Taimon Mvula, Takabva Mawaya, Nedric Madeya of the white towel fame and former national Under-17 player Joseph Kaunda, are some of the top keepers who have come out of Hwange in recent years, CAPS United have become the latest beneficiary of this famed conveyor belt.

In Harmony Nare, Makepekepe might have unearthed a future national team goalkeeper. The 31-year-old Nare joined United from ZPC Hwange during the offseason. So prolific was Nare that he was voted man of the match, despite CAPS United losing 2-0 against Scottland last weekend. "The boy is doing well and I think at his age, he made the right decision to join one of the country's top three clubs," said Munkuli, who won two Premier Soccer League championships with CAPS United in 2004 and 2005.

Munkuli was also voted the best keeper for the 2004 season, when Makepekepe conceded one defeat in 30 league matches. He saw Nare grow up in the mining town of Hwange and was convinced the goal minder would hit top levels. Nare played for a local youth team in Mpumalanga township before joining ZPC Hwange via Prison Eagles. ZPC Hwange who won last year's Southern Region Division One championship with Nare claiming the Player of the Year gong.

Since there is ZPC Kariba already competing in the PSL, ZPC Hwange decided to enter into a partnership with MWOS, which resulted in the Norton based side getting the ticket to the PSL. "Hwange has produced good goalkeepers since the times of the late Posani (late) but the courage to join big teams or move outside town wasn't in our minds until 2003 when myself and Chenjerai (Dube) decided to leave Hwange.

"I am happy for the boy; he has now fulfilled his childhood dream of playing for a big club. "He has followed in my footsteps as I also starred for CAPS United. "CAPS United were renowned for winning Cups and I encourage him to help the team return to winning ways. "I am looking forward to seeing him in the national team soon," added Munkuli, who now works as a goal keepers' coach at Northern Region Soccer League side Golden Eagles.

Nare was born in Gwanda but was raised in Hwange where he was exposed to football. "Hwange has a proud legacy of producing exceptionally skilled goalkeepers, and it's fascinating to explore the reasons behind this phenomenon," Nare said. "One possible factor is the town's vibrant football culture, which encourages young players to hone their skills from a tender age. "Additionally, the presence of well-structured youth development programs and dedicated coaching staff might also play a significant role in nurturing talented keepers.

"Whatever the reasons, it's undeniable that Hwange has earned a reputation as a hub for goalkeeper talent, and it's exciting to think about the next generation of keepers emerging from this football-rich town," added Nare

Ali Sundowns Out To Compete



Staff Writer

Northern Region Soccer League (NRSL) newcomers Ali Sundowns are not looking at just hanging out in the class when the 2025 season comes up.

The Mabvuku-based side that recorded an incredible points haul having lost just one game in 42 matches in the second division last year are busy sharpening their arrows ahead of the NRSL term.

They have fused the predominantly youthful lads who held their own when nailing promotion last year, with some profiled gurus including returning son Godknows Mangani, Clever Boroma who was with Scottland last season and former Greenfuel star Regis Dongo.

Team manager Spencer Chitedega said the outfit was looking to give it their all in the NRSL.

"We spent a number of years in Division 2 and our promotion into the NRSL is a huge step in the right direction. We are never in it to hang out. We want to compete," said Chuitedega.

"We have new signings with a lot of experience to help the young lads out.

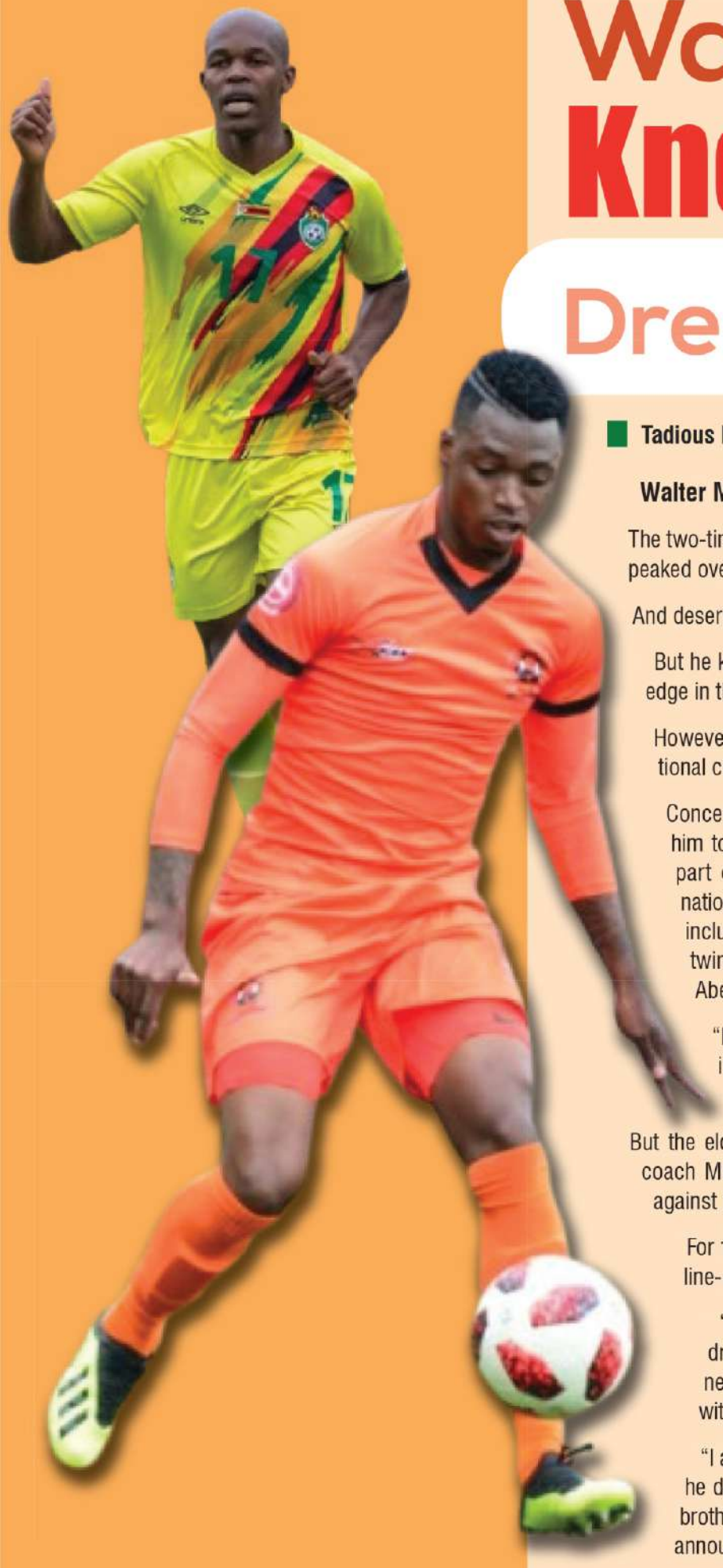
"Some of the new signings have played for Ali Sundowns at one point or the other when the team was still in Division 2 and Division 3. "We believe they will add value and more steel in the team. We already have a group of youngsters who are capable of doing wonders and help the team attain promotion or a top-five place at the very least.

"All we want to see at the end of the day is a good outing by the team in the NRSL.

"The youngsters are very happy that they will be getting a bigger platform to showcase themselves when the NRSL kicks off.

"At the end of the day, it all comes down to the team and its ability to perform well. That's all we want to see." Ali Sundowns sent shockwaves across the local football fraternity as they conceded just 10 goals in 42 games in the third tier last year. They mostly play as a unit but they do have some outstanding stars to watch out for this year.

Striker Sean Mafumhe, who top-scored for them after netting 14 times and recording six assists is certainly one of them alongside Ashton Chirima, David Mapotachama and Markie Murambiwa. One of Ali Sundowns' former players who was in the grind together with Warriors vice-captain Marshal Munetsi Richard Matimba is leading the technical team and he says the players are really absorbing his methods and philosophy.



Walter's Knowledge

Dream Fulfilled

Tadious Manyepo

Walter Musona has been hurting for the past two years.

The two-time Premier Soccer League Soccer Star of the Year has peaked over the same period.

And deservedly, he has become a key member of the Warriors.

But he knew he would even be better with his brother Knowledge in the mix.

However Knowledge had decided to call time on his international career.

Concerted efforts including from Walter himself to convince him to come back were always futile. Walter wished to be part of a handful of siblings to have once played for the national team at one goal like the iconic Ndlovu brothers including the late Adam, Peter and Madinda, the Mugeyi twins William and Wilfred as well as the Mutejis—Cain and Abel.

"It pains me a lot and my heart bleeds," lamented Walter in reference to Knowledge's refusal to come back from retirement last year.

But the elder Musona is now back having been convinced by coach Michael Nees ahead of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers against Benin and Nigeria on March 20 and 25 respectively.

For the first time, the two will share the locker and get to line-up for the Warriors.

"Yeah I'm happy he (Knowledge) is back. It was my dream to play alongside him so yeah I'm excited. I have never played with him before and I can't wait to line-up with him," said Walter.

"I am really eager to play with him as I always said before he decided to come back." Walter said he never knew his brother had decided to make a retirement U-turn until Nees announced his squad for the double fixtures.

"It came as a surprise to me. I wasn't aware that he had decided to come back. But all the same, I am very happy. The expectation is the same. We have to be at our best to get the positive results which we all want."

"The siblings who won a drawn match"

The Chiwunga brothers Lot and Temptation should have been left relieved after their first ever showdown ended in a stalemate.

Lot plays as a striker for Herentals while his young brother Temptation turns out for Dynamos with the midfielder in his second spell with the glamour club.

The two couldn't face-off last year when Lot was still with CAPS United due to injuries and suspensions which somehow ensured the two wouldn't be on the pitch at the same time.

But there was no way out last week when Dynamos and Herentals clashed in Match Day 2 of the league at Rufaro. Lot started on the bench while Temptation, a Dynamos mainstay this season, was in the First 11.

Then the moment arrived in the second half when the former came on. The brothers got two chances to break the deadlock from the opposite ends.



Temptation had two free-kicks saved by Herentals goalkeeper Takudzwa Chikosi while Lot hooked a cut-back against Dynamos' Chikosi opposite Prince Tafiremutsa.

Then he shot wide from close range towards the end. Any team could have won. But for the brothers, the draw was a win. "I really wanted to get one over my brother," said Lot.

"But we couldn't find the goal. This was a day I was dreaming of, to face my own brother in a league match. It was massive. I know if my team had won, I could have felt sorry for him. Such is football but for both of us, I think the draw was a win."

Zimbabwe's own Camavinga



Curtworth Masango

Erick Dombo is nowhere near Real Madrid's world-class Eduardo Camavinga.

The Herentals utility acknowledges that but he always feels challenged whenever people refer to him as "Camavinga".

He has the looks and even spots the same hairstyle as the French star, not mentioning his cultured left which is also Camavinga's weapon.

Naturally, Dombo idolises the Real Madrid star.

"I feel so good and challenged whenever people call me Camavinga. I take that as a challenge to play better and better," said Dombo.

There is a general feeling that the moniker is well-deserved given the 20-year-old's dynamic performances and rapid rise in the Castle Lager Premier Soccer League.

After proving his mettle at Herentals Under-20 in the Northern Region Soccer League, Dombo was elevated into the Student's senior team in the Premiership where he made his debut as a 19-year-old last year.

He made an immediate impact, notching eight assists and two goals—a standout feat for a rookie in the top-flight.

Dombo's journey, however, has been marked by resilience. After beginning his football career at Glenview 1 High School, he transferred to Herentals College in Budiriro, where current Herentals head coach Paul Benza spotted his potential during school matches.

Balancing academics and athletics, Dombo often missed training sessions for exams, yet his persistence paid off when Benza promoted him to the senior squad last year.

"Uncle Paul [Benza] changed my life," Dombo said.

"I would train straight from school, juggling lessons and football. When I joined the senior team, it was tough initially, but I adapted. The chance he gave me opened doors I never dreamt of."

The midfielder's breakout season has transformed his family's circumstances.

"Now I can support my mom, grandparents, and pay school fees for my sisters," he said. "Football has given me that power."

Benza praised the youngster's work ethic.

"I've worked with Dombo from division one and he has always been a good player.

"His attacking is great and he brings lots of positivity to the team. He is well-disciplined which makes it easier for him to perform."

Herentals, currently second placed, are eying a top-four finish this season.

Dombo has already provided a single assist in the first two matches of the season.



Hardrock set high targets

Staff Writer

This is probably what ambition looks like in the flesh.

Central Region Soccer League newcomers Hardrock can easily be mistaken for a Premier Soccer League outfit by its composition.

It's not surprising because that is where they want to end up playing. Owned by businessman Shepherd Chahwanda, who is, in partnership with Prophet Walter Magaya, building a 10 000-seater stadium in Kwekwe, the club is parading a galaxy of experienced stars.

They have since added to their expansive squad Uganda goalkeeper Mathius Kigonya who was with Yadah in the Premiership last year.

He joins his former Yadah teammates Lennox Mucheto and Prosper Kafelapanjila in the Kwekwe-based team.

Hardrock also have in their goalkeeping ranks former Chegutu Pirates' Tafadzwa Jabangwe and Takabva Mawaya who once kept goal for the Warriors.

Seven-time Premier Soccer League champion Devon Chafa, the hugely-travelled Donald Ngoma, Newman Sianchali, Cleopas Dube and Reuben Machaya are some of the experienced gurus in the set-up.

Coach Calvin Maphosa said the team's sights are set on winning promotion into the league.

"We have all the support from the club president and leadership. That means our only job is to concentrate on playing and winning games.

"I believe we have assembled a team that is capable of competing in the CRSL," said Maphosa.

"I am sure we will throw some really good punches. We have players who have seen it all at Premiership and national team level.

"That should come in handy as we navigate through the difficult terrain in the CRSL."

The CRSL season kicks off on April 5 with Hardrock travelling to face ZRP Gwanda before returning home for a date against promotion and local rivals Tongogara.

Chapungu, Sheasham and Gwanda Pirates are some of the pre-season favourites to clinch promotion from the CRSL.

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