

Namibia Today Sport

Black Stars Outshine Super Eagles in Soccer Semifinal

By Nick Said

Ghana have booked their place in the Africa Cup of Nations final for the first time in 18 years after beating west African rivals Nigeria 1-0 in Luanda on Thursday.

The Super Eagles controlled large parts of the semifinal, but were unable to find a goal after Asamoah Gyan had given Ghana the lead midway through the first half.

The Nigerians have been far from convincing in this tournament, bar perhaps the 3-0 win over Mozambique in the group stages, and they could not turn that poor form around against a young, inexperienced Ghana side who appeared to be living off adrenaline alone.

These are heady days for Black Stars fans, with the juniors having won the 2009 FIFA Under-20 World Cup in Egypt recently, and the senior team having first sealed World Cup



qualification in South Africa, and now a place in the final of the continental championship.

Ghana saw little possession in the early stages of tonight's semifinal, but were ahead on 21 minutes. A Kwadwo Asamoah corner was curled to the near post and Gyan stole in ahead of his marker to nod the ball home.

Nigeria should have been level seven minutes later as Peter Odemwingie tried his

luck from 35 yards out. But he succeeded only in hitting it straight at Obafemi Martins, who controlled brilliantly just inside the area but could not beat Richard Kingson in the Ghana goal despite having the time and space to pick his spot.

Odemwingie then missed a fairly simple headed chance, before shooting wide when well placed as Nigeria began to create some clear-cut openings.

It was then Martins' turn to miss two further chances, first

completing a "fresh air" shot after John Obi Mikel's cushioned header, and then finding the out-stretched right arm of Kingson as he was put clean through on goal.

Elderson Echiejile drove a ball across the box, but it hit Yakubu Aiyegbeni on the thigh right in front of goal and went wide, with the Everton man having no chance to control it despite having the goalmouth at his mercy.

Yakubu and Martins both had chances behind the Ghana defence, but the Super Eagles' frustration mounted as they repeatedly failed to get a shot away from inside the six-yard box.

Ghana proved able to ride the wave of pressure and deservedly booked their place in Sunday's final, while Nigeria will have to be content with a place in the third-place play-off on Saturday.

shadow of their famously attacking selves - rarely penetrating the Zambian defence with any menace or even purpose.

After the final 120 minutes of play, a penalty shootout was the only deciding factor. Four of Zambia's players in the names of Noah Chivuta, Christopher Katongo, Emmanuel Mayuka and goalkeeper Mweene scored from the 11 yard spot. But Thomas Nyirenda's effort was saved by Super Eagles keeper Vincent Enyeama who scored the winning kick himself.

Nigeria's big five penalty takers were Mikel, Martins, Victor Obinna, Osaze Odemwingie and Enyeama who performed task with precision to the delight of all Nigerians and their supporters worldwide.

Despite the loss, Zambia's coach Herve Renard should have been pleased his team managed to contain Nigeria, who were favourites before the game.

Something the people of SADC have to be proud of, however is that Zambia qualified for the quarter-finals of the Africa Cup of Nations with a confident victory over Gabon. They ended top of the Group D table with four points followed by Cameroon and Gabon also at four points while Tunisia have to be content with three points. Hats off to Zambia!

As I see it

By Kayele M. Kambombo

Players get lucrative win-bonuses

The show time for the African football of the most keenly contested football tournaments in the world will come to an end on Sunday when the lucrative cup will be for grab between Egypt/Algeria and Ghana at the final in Luanda.

This was indeed a tournament full of drama, agony and ecstasy and it lived to its expectation; it was a fortnight for the real lovers of skilful football.

The football was fast and furious. It was also full of skills. Africa is now recognized as the Third Force in the world football, after Latin America and Europe. Many observers are convinced that African football is the most entertaining of the lot.

Millions of viewers in Africa and Europe were able to watch each match live. Satellites television stations had saturation coverage of the tournament. Some hundreds of journalists from all over the football playing world have attended this tournament.

The 27th Orange African Cup of Nations started on January 10 at the 11th November Stadium in Luanda with a match between hosts Angola and Mali that ended in a 4-all draw. It is unfortunate that the two teams were sent packing.

The matches were also played at other stadium in Benguela, Lubango and Cabinda.

Now it is that time again when the final will be staged in Luanda on Sunday, January 31, 2010 where two African giants will square up, one of which will be crowned the champions of the 27th Orange African Cup of Nations.

Egypt is in search of its seventh victory in 2010 stretching from 1957 (1959, 1986, 1998, 2006 and 2008), while Ghana want to clinch the cup for its fifth time this year (1963, 1965, 1978, 1982). (Nigeria won the cup twice in 1980 and 1994. Algeria only won the cup once in 1990 and will fight for its second victory in 20 years)

In a very interesting and indeed pleasing scenario Nigeria have budgeted N\$22.5 million for 2010 AFCON and have already remunerated its players lucratively for reaching the semi-finals of the African Cup of Nations. Each player pocketed US\$30 000 (N\$225 000) for getting pass the first hurdle and added another N\$93 750 for beating Zambia to reach the semi-final. Each of the Super Eagle was promised another N\$112 500 if they beat their arch-rivals Black Stars of Ghana to reach the final.

Palancas Negro of Angola were splashed with a whooping N\$1,125 000 even though they lost 1-0 against Ghana at the quarterfinals.

Angola's striker Flavio Amando got an inducement of N\$300 000 for scoring three goals for his country. Manucho Goncalves and Felisberto Amaral, better known as Gilberto have received N\$150 000 respectively for a goal apiece.

Midfielder Jose Alberto and goalkeeper Carlos Fernandes received N\$75 000 each while other players of the squad were rewarded with N\$375 000 to carve up.

Namibia should take a leaf from the book of Nigeria and Angola. Incentives for players in football or any other sport discipline play a paramount role. It encourages players to go all out and do it willy-nilly.

Hats off to Chipolopolo

By Kayele M. Kambombo

WINDHOEK

Chipolopolo of Zambia fought heroically but went down with dignity against the Super Eagles of Nigeria.

The Chipolopolo were amongst the four teams (Angola, Malawi and Mozambique) representing the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Zambia lost 5-4 in a penalty shootout against the 2010 World Cup bound Nigeria after a hard fought quarterfinal match that went to extra-time but ended in a goalless stalemate.

It was Zambia's game from the start as Chipolopolo contained the Super Eagles and clearly dominated the possession. Super Eagles were a



Herve Renard has guided Zambia to their first quarter-final in 14 years but wishes to coach a very top team one day.

Renard keen for top African job

Zambia coach Herve Renard says he is keen to take charge of a top African team when his contract expires in July.

The Frenchman, 41, has led his team into their first Africa Cup of Nations quarter-final in 14 years.

Despite reviving Chipolopolo, Renard says his ambition is to soon work with a higher profile team than Zambia.

"I know what I want, I'm very ambitious and I'm not scared to say so," said Renard, who assisted Claude Le Roy with Ghana two

years ago.

"I said even before this tournament that I wish to be coach of a very top team one day.

"I'm young but I'm not scared about anything.

"Now I can speak English and I'm French, so it's only the Portuguese-speaking countries like Angola and Mozambique that it would be difficult for me to work

with because the language is very important.

"But if they qualify for the World Cup, I will sign immediately for them. "But really, I would want to stay in Africa with a bigger team. Claude Le Roy explained to me a lot of things about Africa.

"There are good things and bad things in Africa, but he said his heart is always in Africa. I'm the same now. I like this continent."

The Frenchman admitted his time with the Chipolopolo of Zambia may soon come to an end.

"My contract will finish very soon, in a few months," he said.

"I'm not sure I want to extend or renew my contract, so even if they don't want me, it won't be a problem."