

Namibia Today Sport

Weah backs Ghana against Uruguay

Former World Player of the Year George Weah has backed Ghana to beat Uruguay in the World Cup quarter-finals tonight.

"They just have to look at their team and whatever ingredients are missing, they can add to win," Weah said.

The Black Stars were the only African team to make it out of

the group stages and went on to thrill the continent with a 2-1 second round win over USA.

"No-one expected Ghana to be in the quarter-finals," Weah added.

"That's because it is one of the smallest African teams.

"We expected Cameroon or Ivory Coast to get that far."

Victory for Ghana would

make them the first African team to reach the semi-finals of the World Cup.

George Weah, who at the height of his career graced the pitch for top European clubs such as AC Milan and Paris St Germain, believes history is within the reach of the Black Stars.

"Ghana was not the

favourite, but again I think they can do well against Uruguay.

"They can even win if they have the desire."

The 48-year-old Weah is the only African player ever to be named World Player of the Year. With victory tonight, the Black Stars could achieve a similar distinctive position in African football (*BBC Sport*)

Muntari in glory hunt at World Cup

By Michael Oti Adjei

Sulley Muntari insists Ghana are determined to go further than any other African country at the World Cup.

The Black Stars midfielder says they will not fall into the trap of thinking the quarter-final is the height of their achievement.

The Black Stars will be involved in only the third quarter-final in World Cup history featuring an African side.

Cameroon previously lost to England in 1990 while Senegal fell to Turkey at the same stage at the 2002 World Cup.

"Senegal and Cameroon did a great job but we want to break records, we want to do well and we want to go further and further and see what happens next," Muntari told BBC World Service Africa's Fast Track programme.

The Inter Milan midfielder who was previously a regular in the Ghana side has been forced to watch most of his side's games from the bench as a result of in-

jury and disciplinary problems.

The 25-year-old says he will give his best if picked by Ghana coach Milovan Rajevac to replace the suspended Dede Ayew.

Muntari has also been impressed by how the new members of the side have fitted in.

"What the new guys have done is fantastic," he said.

"Kevin (Prince Boateng), Dede, they have done a great

job.

"It's always been like that with the national team.

"People have come in and done a great job."

Uruguay have caught the eye this World Cup with their refreshing brand of attacking football.

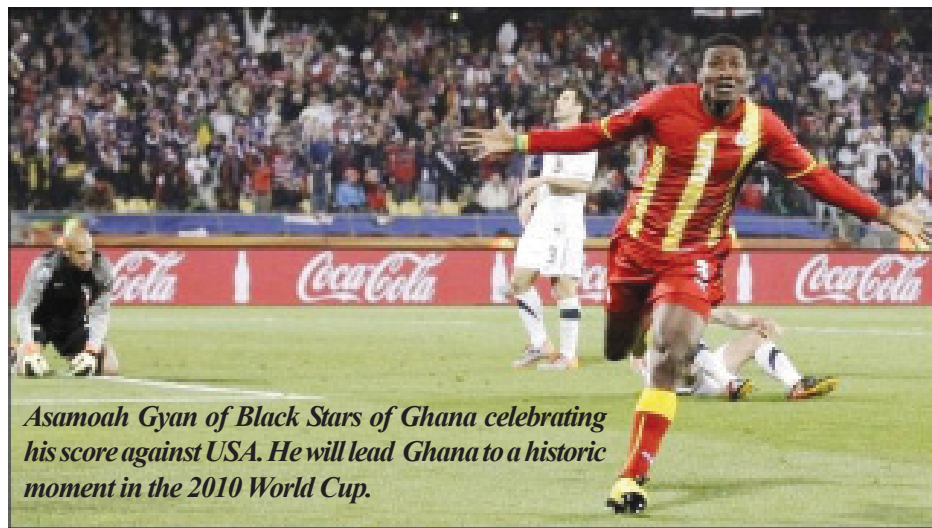
Their strike force of Luis Suarez of Ajax and Atletico Madrid's Diego Forlan have been potent, scoring five times

between them in four games already.

Muntari reckons the key to Ghana's victory will be keeping the pair in check.

"These guys are incredible in the penalty area and score a lot of goals in Europe and already they have showed that in this World Cup," he said.

"But we have to keep our guards here and prevented them from playing. If we do that we have a real chance." (*BBC Sport*).



Asamoah Gyan of Black Stars of Ghana celebrating his score against USA. He will lead Ghana to a historic moment in the 2010 World Cup.

Ghana sustains African pride at World Cup

Ghana's Black Stars are through to the quarter-final of the World Cup after defeating the United States 2-1 in extra time. Will Ross watched the game with fans in the Ghanaian capital, Accra.

This was one long party which was briefly interrupted by an American goal.

When the referee blew the final whistle at the end of extra time the unbridled dancing began across Ghana and beyond.

But there had already been a few parties long before the end of the game.

Even before a ball had been kicked it was clear that the army of red, gold and green supporters was primed for a celebration.

You could not have missed the game even if you tried.

There were screens everywhere - on crowded streets and in the packed bars.

Young men armed with paint brushes and four colours were busy painting the flagless. When the Black Stars are playing if you do not have flag to wave you can wear one on your face.

Quick prayers

At a popular drinking spot in Accra's Osu I saw two lonely



If you don't have a flag to wave for Ghana, Africa's only representative left in the global showpiece, 2010 World Cup, please wear one.

looking men draped in America's flag - the stars and stripes.

"They look Ghanaian - what are they up to?" I wondered.

Jubilant Ghanaians celebrate victory

"They just want to do something extraordinary, that's all. They are full-blooded Ghanaians," I was answered.

When the Black Stars fans saw Ghana's team arriving at the stadium, the cheer was so big you might have thought the World Cup trophy was being lifted already.

Did people stand quietly for the national anthem?

No chance. The vuvuzelas,

whistles and yelps of excitement were not going to be put on hold for anything.

The dancing and singing began when Kevin Prince Boateng struck the opening goal after just five minutes.

The party was rudely interrupted when USA was awarded a penalty.

Before the referee had found his yellow card, the woman to my left had dropped to her knees in front of the TV screen for some fervent praying.

This was not the only call for divine intervention I had witnessed over the last 24 hours. In Osu the small, basic classrooms of a two-storey primary school are regularly transformed into small churches for all-night Pentecostal services.

"We are confident in your name dear God that the team will be victorious," the priest said in the Twi language on the eve of the game.

He then called on everyone to pray for the players. With eyes screwed shut the congregation clapped furiously and called out their own personal

prayers for the Black Stars.

Pan-Africa pride

In fact America's equalizer was merely a respite for the dancers and vuvuzela blowers.

They were soon in action again when Asamoah Gyan blasted home Ghana's second - a goal that meant the DJ would not be going home any time soon.

He did not need much of a music collection: The repeat button was leaned on as hips swayed to Shakira's Waka Waka (This Time For Africa) - the catchy World Cup Song which was widely criticised when first released.

It is now putting smiles on people packing dance floors and in bars, streets and living rooms across Africa.

They have tweaked the lyrics here in Accra and these days the chorus often morphs into: "This Time for Gha-na".

The Black Stars haven't just made Ghanaians proud.

Being the only African team left in the cup, they are being cheered on by fans across the continent - all wanting the dancing to continue right through to the final.

As I see it

By Kayele M. Kambombo

The football World Cup of 2010 so far went well despite negative publication in the western media as many in the so-called first world felt nothing good will come off the world cup being held in Africa, South Africa in particular.

The majority of Europeans have, not only negative impression about Africa, but hugely ignorant, as they think Africans live in the jungle sharing shelter with wild animals. Many are being fooled by the Tarzan and Jane movies that were shot in the jungles of Africa, way back when movies were shot in black and white films.

The success of South Africa has given hope to other countries in the continent looking to host international sports events as a way of boosting their economies and progressing with major infrastructure projects.

The next World Cup will be staged in 2014 in Brazil while the 2016 Olympics will be held in Rio. I certainly feel that the not-so-many European countries' supporters that came to witness the world beautiful game of football in South Africa will honestly carry the message objectively to the rest of the world.

This is where regrets will play a big role for these who where made to believe that crime in South Africa is ever on the increase and security "worries" were the main factor to substantiate the dirty tricks of some media houses in Europe.

Germany would agree with me on this point because their players were preparing to come with bulletproof jackets to South Africa, as it was believed that the host was the most "unsafe" country. What a lot of rubbish!

Africans are peaceful minded people. They love their culture and tradition. It goes without saying that when we (Africans) are playing football we sing. It is a force of nature. We sing as we breathe. That portrays a moment to show the diversity and cultural richness of Africa. It is going to be watched by a lot of people who don't perceive Africa and South Africa the same way we do and it will help to change those perceptions.

Come the July 11, the first World Cup on the African soil will be a celebration of both the African continent, the rest of the world and the beautiful game of football.

This is the very first time that the World Cup comes to South Africa and Africa at large and the world will now get to see, experience and celebrate the excellence, the beauty and the expertise of Africa. To the South African people I would like to say lets welcome the world. Let's show them peace and let's show love. Let's celebrate and show them how wonderful we are.

Africa and the inhabitants who live in it are united. We are saying the World Cup in South Africa is about the world returning to where it all began - the original home, to the first place. It is about things going full circle. And there is no turning back.

Hats off to the 2010 FIFA World Cup Organising Committee for the mammoth operation that turned to be the first ever 2010 World Cup staged on the African soil a success. There has been tremendous teamwork and communication between the cities and provincial authorities and FIFA and the Local Organising Committee (LOC). There has been equally excellent communication in particular between the LOC and FIFA in terms of assessing the requirements for this event and delivering on it. All parties involved sense they were building something special and are set for and working hard to deliver a spectacular event.

Africa and South Africa grabbed a hold of the opportunity presented by the 2010 FIFA World Cup and made sure they use it to develop the game or it will be a wasted opportunity.

This so far was a great achievement as the ones who are younger than eight-years-old have never seen this and now they can live it. Now this is a time of unity in purpose for all Africans to render their unflinching support to the Black Stars of Ghana; the time to play and win, the time for gratification of Africa, the Diaspora and all sympathizers for Ghana and the world in particular.

Ghana should win the 2010 World Cup, as they have all it takes, the umph (determination) and grandeur.

Let us support Ghana 120 percent wherever we are. Let us show the prophets of doom that the time is now for Africa to claim its rightful place in the beautiful game of Africa. KENAKO.