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BHORA IBHOLA

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE FANS



ZIMBABWE COACHES MERRY GO ROUND



FOREWARD FROM THE EDITOR

KUNDAYI MAWEMA

MARKETING MANAGER LAGERS

As we welcome you to another edition of Bhora iBhola, Zimbabwean football finds itself at one of the most compelling stages of the season.

With every match carrying greater significance, the race for honours at both ends of the Castle Lager Premier Soccer League table continues to capture the imagination of supporters across the country.

From packed stadiums to spirited debates in homes, workplaces and communities, football continues to bring Zimbabweans together in a way few things can. The intensity of the title race, the fight for survival and the pursuit of

individual excellence are all reminders of why the beautiful game remains close to our hearts

This edition highlights some of the stories shaping our football landscape today. We celebrate the achievements of July Coach of the Month Aristică Cioabă and July Player of the Month Washington Navaya, whose contributions have helped raise the level of competition on the pitch.

We also reflect on the fascinating conversations taking place around coaching in Zimbabwean football, honour the enduring legacy of the late Wiesław Grabowski, and revisit the remarkable journeys of personalities whose contributions continue to influence the game.

As a proud sponsor of the Castle Lager Premier Soccer League, we remain inspired by the resilience, ambition and unwavering passion displayed by players, coaches, administrators and, most importantly, the supporters who make Zimbabwean football what it is.

Whether your team is challenging for the championship, chasing a cup run, or battling to preserve its top-flight status, every supporter has a part to play in creating the atmosphere and energy that make our league special.

Football has always been about more than results. It is about hope, identity, community and shared experiences. It creates heroes, inspires dreams and provides moments that unite us across generations. That spirit is evident throughout the pages of this edition, and it is a spirit that Castle Lager is proud to celebrate and support.

As the season moves closer to its climax, we wish every team, official and supporter the very best. May we continue to enjoy football that excites, inspires and brings us together.

It All Comes Together With A Castle

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RACE FOR SOCCER STAR OF THE YEAR HEATS UP

By Sports Reporter

The race for the 2026 Soccer Star of the Year Award is beginning to gather momentum, with several players producing outstanding performances as the Castle Lager Premier Soccer League season enters its final stretch.

Reigning Soccer Star of the Year Washington Navaya remains one of the leading contenders after another prolific campaign in front of goal. The Hardrock striker currently tops the league's scoring charts with 15 goals after 27 games, making himself a potential winner of the accolade.

Navaya won the Soccer Star of the Year award last year after finishing as the league's top goalscorer with 17 goals while playing for TelOne.

Other than Navaya, Dynamos forward Frank Agyemang has also kept himself firmly in contention. The Glamour Boys' forward has netted 11 league goals and has proved to be one of the league's most reliable finishers.

Agyemang has been consistent for Dembare despite the ups and downs at the club, which saw the firing of coach Genesis Mangombe along the way. The Ghanaian forward is the first player since Christian Epoupa in 2017 to reach double figures for Dynamos in the league.

Scotland forward Khama Billiat is another strong candidate after enjoying an impressive season under coach Norman Mapeza. The experienced forward has matched Agyemang's tally of 11 goals, a revival of his form after a poor campaign last year that saw him score just one goal.

For Billiat, the PSL Soccer Star of the Year accolade is still missing from his trophy cabinet; the closest he came was in 2024 at Yadah, when he was voted second runner-up. While attackers often dominate the Soccer Star conversation, Scotland goalkeeper Nelson Chadya has built a strong case of his own.

The shot-stopper has already registered an incredible 20 clean sheets, underlining his importance to one of the league's best defensive records this season.

Chadya's consistency between the posts has been instrumental in Scotland's success, and his performances could see a goalkeeper seriously challenge for the country's top individual football honour.

With several matches still to be played, the race for the Soccer Star of the Year award remains wide open.



SENONG FACES UNFORGIVING PLATINUM EXPECTATIONS

By Tsungirai Silandulo

Joel Luphala must have had an eerie feeling over impending doom when he led FC Platinum in their Premiership contest against MWOS on July 25, 2026. Perhaps for the first time since launching his journey as a topflight head coach, his body language told more than a 1000 words.



Although he is never animated on the touchline, that particular day he was colder, muted and distant, as if he was just observing from behind a pane of frosted glass. His arms remained stubbornly crossed, his gaze fixed somewhere beyond the pitch, on a horizon only he could see.

"We have disappointed the club and I have to be the first one to put my hand up to take responsibility as the leader," Luphahla said. "...I have let the people of Zvishavane down." Luphahla somehow knew that his journey with the platinum miners was coming to an end, and he was axed two days later.

He led the team to their worst record since promotion in 2011, collecting 31 points in 25 games to settle for position 11 on the log table. His replacement South African Thabo Senong, faces high and unforgiving expectations as the club wants an immediate turnaround.

Senong is aware of the mammoth task at hand. "We have eight league matches remaining, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a big club," he said. "We are mindful of the responsibility that comes with representing the club...the team is not in a good position, so there is a lot of work ahead."

The club has made it clear that they are still ambitious and have intentions to dominate the league as champions again. "We understand things have changed with the coming in of new clubs and that also means the competition has increased," club CEO Collin Nikisi said.

"But we also believe we have quality players, and it is unfortunate it didn't work out with coach Joel, hence we replaced him. We do things that are sustainable, we are clear on our goals and believe we can still get results to finish in a respectable position."

However, it has been years since the writing was on the wall for FC Platinum; terrain shifted under a watchful Norman Mapeza. Continued decline since 2023 tells a story, and two technical teams have failed to turn things around. Can Senong be the one to do it?

Former Warriors goalkeeper and 1982 Castle Soccer Star of the Year, Japhet Mparutsa, told a story of how he found himself at South African club Bloemfontein Celtic without knowing of the deal.

He said former Warriors and Darryn T coach Wieslaw Grabowski just handed him an air ticket on a Thursday and told him, "Your flight to South Africa is on Saturday."

That was Grabowski for you, a man full of surprises. Mparutsa joined Bloemfontein Celtic on a R15 000 sign on fee which Grabowski himself personally handed over.

Grabowski's contribution to Zimbabwean football was so immense, many believe he in fact changed the face of Zimbabwean football.

Even ZIFA paid tribute to Grabowski, reiterating that his impact on Zimbabwean football will be remembered for as long as Zimbabwean football lives.

Surely, the likes of Alois Bunjira, Stewart Murisa, Edelbert Dinha, Gift Muzadzi, Felix Antonio, Usman Misi, and Musareka Jenitala - amongst many others, owe their football success to Grabowski.

Along with the likes of Dickson Choto, George Mbwando, Takesure Chinyama, Costa Nhamoinesu, Prince Matore, and Lloyd Chitembwe, they played European football due to Grabowski's influence and connections.

As Murisa reflects, "He gave me guidance. He taught us football. He perfected us."

Former Warriors captain Norman Mapeza testified that he would not be what he is today had it not been for Grabowski who opened the horizons for him by facilitating his move to Millieder in Poland.

Mapeza went to Millieder along with John Phiri, one of the most capped Zimbabwe Warriors ever.

"I lost someone who was like a father to me. He helped me a lot as to what I am today," said Mapeza of Grabowski who

GRABOWSKI : A MAN OF JOKES AND SURPRISES

By Michael Kariati



passed on in his home country of Poland on 29 July.

Former ZIFA Mashonaland East chairman Francis Nyamutsamba spoke effusively of Grabowski vision and love for junior talent.

"He could spot good talent at the blink of an eye. Most of the good players that played for the Warriors were identified and given their chance by Grabowski," said Nyamutsamba.

George Mbwando, who was part of Grabowski's trailblazing 1995 Zimbabwe U23 squad, said Grabowski was full of jokes.

"He was a funny guy. He used to make jokes. He could even use jokes in emphasizing his football point," said Mb-

wando.

The Polish mentor also had an eye for foreign talent. He brought to Zimbabwe two of the most talented Zambian players, Webster Chikabala and Derby Makinka.

Makinka is one of the best players ever to have taken to the Zimbabwean football fields, and it can be argued that in 1993, he single handedly saved Darryn T from relegation.

He went on to be selected among the 11 finalists for the Castle Soccer Star of the Year Award having played for Darryn T for only half of the season.

According to ZIFA, what Grabowski did for Zimbabwean football will live for as long as Zimbabwean football lives.

CAN DYNAMOS MAKE IT FOUR IN A ROW?

By Sports Reporter



After dominating the last three editions of the Chibuku Super Cup, the big question ahead of this year's competition is whether Dynamos can extend their remarkable reign in Zimbabwe's premier knockout tournament. The Glamour Boys began their title defence with a 4-1 win against TelOne in a first-round tie over the weekend of August 15-16. Having lifted the trophy in 2023, 2024 and 2025, Dynamos have established themselves as the team to beat, and their supporters will be expecting another strong challenge.

New Technical Director Aristica Cioaba, who arrived in Zimbabwe just over a month ago, is well aware of the expectations that come with leading a club of Dynamos' stature. The Romanian has overseen an encouraging revival in the team's Castle Lager Premier Soccer League campaign, with DeMbare going five matches unbeaten, recording three wins and two draws. Speaking on the club's prospects in the Chibuku Super Cup, Cioaba stressed that Dynamos remain focused on competing for honours on all fronts. "The focus is on all competitions," said Cioaba.

"I think every team wants to win the league and the cups. We have strong competition and our target is to fight in the league and finish in the top four. As for the cup competition, the club, management and players are all focused on winning at least one trophy this season. Dynamos is a big name and, step by step, we need to restore the respect that this club deserves. To achieve that, we need a strong finish in the league and to win silverware. "What I have seen in the month that I have been here is that Dynamos have a huge support base, a rich history and a strong identity. This club has the mentality to compete and fight for championships."

Their first-round opponents, TelOne, booked their place in the main draw after edging Triangle 5-3 on penalties following a goalless preliminary-round encounter at Mandava Stadium. Premiership newcomers Agama also advanced via a penalty shootout, defeating Manica Diamonds 5-4 after another goalless draw at Baobab Stadium. They were rewarded with a first-round clash against league pace-setters MWOS.

There are several headline fixtures to look forward to, with reigning league champions Scotland set to host FC Platinum in what promises to be one of the ties of the round. FC Platinum recently appointed South African coach Thabo Senong and will be eager to make an immediate impact in the competition. The Zvishavane side previously won the Chibuku Super Cup twice under Norman Mapeza, who is now in charge at Scotland.

Former "Cup Kings" CAPS United, still searching for their first Chibuku Super Cup title, faced a difficult opening assignment against Simba Bhora. Despite the challenge, CAPS United Chief Executive Morton Dodzo welcomed the draw. "When you enter a competition, you have to be prepared to face any team," said Dodzo. It's a fair draw and I think it's going to be an exciting match." Another mouth-watering encounter will see Bulawayo giants Highlanders square off against cross-town rivals Chicken Inn in a highly anticipated derby.

First round draw (15-16 August)

- ✓ Scotland v FC Platinum
- ✓ Hardrock v Bulawayo Chiefs
- ✓ CAPS Utd v Simba Bhora
- ✓ Dynamos v TelOne
- ✓ Herentals v FC Hunters
- ✓ Ngezi Platinum Stars v ZPC Kariba
- ✓ MWOS v Agama
- ✓ Highlanders v Chicken Inn

RECYCLING WORN-OUT, OLD BROOMS HURTING PSL

By Sports Reporter



Zimbabwean football has developed an unhealthy habit of recycling coaches at every turn, but with little to show in terms of results and overall development of the game. A coach leaves one struggling club only to reappear weeks later at another. The names change positions, but the story remains the same. The trend has once again come under the spotlight this season, with the same coaches often finding themselves fighting relegation battles or struggling to meet expectations. The question is whether this constant recycling is helping Zimbabwean football grow. Interestingly, some of the most refreshing and impactful contributions to local football in recent years have come from coaches recruited from outside the country.

When Highlanders appointed former Jose Mourinho's assistant Baltemar Brito, Bosso enjoyed one of their most competitive campaigns in years, embarking on a lengthy unbeaten run that restored belief among the club's supporters. Brito's success ultimately earned him a stint with the Warriors. Dutch coach Hendrikus Pieter de Jongh also brought a fresh perspective during his time at FC Platinum, introducing modern European training methods and guiding the Zvishavane side through challenging continental assignments. Now Dynamos appear to be reaping the benefits of a similar approach with the appointment of Romanian technical director Aristica Cioaba. In the short time he has been at the club, Cioaba has helped stabilise an inconsistent campaign while restoring structure, discipline and confidence within the Glamour Boys camp.

Just weeks ago, the football fraternity was united in celebrating the legacy of the late Wieslaw Grabowski, whose influence on Zimbabwean football remains widely respected decades after his arrival in the country. The contrast is difficult to ignore. This is not to say Zimbabwe lacks talented local coaches. The country has produced respected tacticians capable of success. The bigger concern is whether local football has become trapped in a comfort zone where clubs are reluctant to search beyond familiar territory. Dynamos chairperson Vincent Chawonza says the club has full confidence in its new technical leadership, citing Cioaba's modern training meth-

and vast experience as key qualities needed to guide the Glamour Boys back to the glory days. "I trust that his training methods are modern and also his experience is what we need as Dynamo's Football Club," said Chawonza. "To our supporters, let's keep supporting these great strategic decisions that we are making and also I would like to let you know that in football we always chase a moving target. "Once we achieve certain things, we aim higher. So, I think the direction that we have taken this year as Dynamos is great and we keep improving," said Chawonza. Whether DeMbare's move was a master stroke will be seen at the end of the season. But so far, there has been great improvement in the way in which the team plays and results have been coming, with three wins and two draws since the Romanian joined them. FC Platinum have also decided to go the same route to inject fresh ideas by replacing Joel Luphahla with South African, Thabo Senong.

The platinum miners' Chief Executive Officer Collin Niki-si believes the coaching changes will yield the desired results. "We do things that are sustainable. We are clear on our goals, and we believe we can still get results," he told local media." FC Platinum, who won four league titles on the bounce a few years back, have faced serious challenge from the rich new clubs. "We understand things have changed with the coming in of new clubs. And that also means the competition has increased. But we also believe we have quality players, and it is unfortunate it didn't work out with coach Joel (Luphahla)." In South Africa, leading clubs such as Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs have increasingly looked beyond their borders for expertise. Orlando Pirates enjoyed one of the most successful periods in their recent history under Spaniard Jose Riveiro, who won multiple domestic trophies and transformed the club's playing identity. Kaizer Chiefs, meanwhile, invested in Tunisian coach Nasreddine Nabi and then Frenchman Fernando da Cruz as part of a broader efforts to modernise their technical structures.

While results were initially mixed, the club remained committed to importing fresh knowledge and new ideas. Experts said one reason for the continued rotation of coaches in Zimbabwe is economics. Local coaches are generally cheaper to hire than foreign counterparts. Most Zimbabwean clubs operate with limited budgets and often choose affordability over long-term technical development. While many local coaches possess CAF qualifications, very few have been exposed to modern high-performance environments, data analysis systems, sports science programmes and international football cultures that are increasingly shaping the global game. As a result, clubs often end up selecting from the same small pool of available coaches. The irony is that countries making progress are doing the exact opposite. Zimbabwe's challenge is not that local coaches are incapable. The problem is that the system continues to recycle the same ideas. Foreign coaches are coming to help develop an ecosystem that eventually improves local coaching capacity.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

By Sukoluhle Mthethwa

Lawrence Phiri will forever be grateful for what Highlanders did for him. He is the man he is today because of the club that paid for his primary and secondary school education.

Born 76 years ago and turning 77 in November, the Highlanders legend, who played almost every position, attended Lozikeyi Primary School in Nguboyenja before moving to Mzilikazi Township, where he attended secondary school at Mgandane (now Mzilikazi High School).

"I am a Bulawayo kid who went through childhood struggles just like any other child in the locations. At Lozikeyi Primary, I was introduced to football by one of my mentors, Leonard Sidambe, a teacher and headmaster. He introduced me to Highlanders. I joined Highlanders when I was only 13 years old. When I went through primary education, Highlanders did very well for me. They paid for my Junior Certificate and Ordinary Level fees," said Phiri.

Phiri used to wash the team's laundry and sell sweets and oranges to help his family get by.

“

**Highlanders
is in my DNA**

-LAWRENCE PHIRI



A JOURNEY WITH BOSSO

- 1969** • He was among the first juniors at the club and, when Highlanders joined the Rhodesia Football Association structures in 1969, he was among those left at Mat High City, a team that maintained the club's Bulawayo African Football Association franchise.
- 1971** • His break into the first team came in 1971-72 when Silas Ndlovu became club manager. He brought Phiri into the Highlanders first team to deputise Ananias Dube in goal. He was eventually moved to right-back, going on to play almost every other position.
- 1973** • He was part of the history-making side that won the Chibuku Trophy in 1973.
- 1974** • They went on to clinch three consecutive regional league titles and a national play-off in 1974.
- 1980** • Phiri won the 1980 Chibuku Trophy and Heroes Cup.
- 1982** • Retired in 1982 to take up coaching.
- 1984** • He was then appointed manager in 1984.

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He was part of the history-making side that won the Chibuku Trophy in 1973. They went on to clinch three consecutive regional league titles and a national play-off in 1974.

Phiri won the 1980 Chibuku Trophy and Heroes Cup before retiring in 1982 to take up coaching. He was then appointed manager in 1984.

During his eight years as manager, Bosso won the Chibuku Trophy, Rothmans Shield, BAT Rosebowl, Castle Cup, Zifa Cup, Africa Day Cup, Heroes Shield and Independence Cup.

He played alongside Majuta Mpofu, Billy Sibanda, Itai Chieza, Bruce Grobbelaar, Boet van Ays, Cavin Duberley, John Vela, Josiah Nxumalo and Benjie Mpofu. As manager, he was in charge of a team that included legends such as Madinda, Tito Paketh, Peter Nkomo, Netsayi Moyo, Peter Ndlovu, Douglas Mloyi, the late Mercedes Sibanda, Rahman Gumbo, Willard Khumalo and Titus Majola, among many others.

8 YEARS OF SUCCESS AS MANAGER



In 1993, he began a new chapter in Botswana as manager of Notwane, where he helped establish the structures of a sports association while overseeing the football wing's most successful era.

TEAMATES & BROTHERS

He played alongside Majuta Mpofu, Billy Sibanda, Itai Chieza, Bruce Grobbelaar, Boet van Ays, Cavin Duberley, John Vela, Josiah Nxumalo and Benjie Mpofu. As manager, he was in charge of a team that included legends such as Madinda, Tito Paketh, Peter Nkomo, Netsayi Moyo, Peter Ndlovu, Douglas Mloyi, the late Mercedes Sibanda, Rahman Gumbo, Willard Khumalo and Titus Majola, among many others.



Phiri has since returned home and is running Legends Academy with Mloyi and Gibson Homela.

He is called Lofty because of his height, a nickname given to him by former teammate Jeffrey Mpofu. Phiri says much has changed, but he wants the team manager to be part of the executive committee and play a role in driving the football direction so that Bosso can return to the top. He is married and has three sons.

THE FARMER FOOTBALL COMMENTATOR.

Sports Reporter

Did you know that prominent radio and television football commentator and analyst Stanley Katsande is a farmer?

Well, that is the situation at hand, as Katsande grows chickens, maize, soya beans, potatoes and wheat, and is also involved in horticulture.

That is his other side of life when he is not on radio and television, a job he says he enjoys immensely and has loved from an early age.

In fact, Katsande is proud of the road he has travelled as a soccer commentator.

"Everyone knows there was Evans Mambara, there is Charles Mabika, and there is me, Stanley Katsande," laughed Katsande.

An engineer by profession, Katsande jokingly says the best part of being on radio and television is that he gets paid for doing what he likes most.

More importantly, he says, there are many benefits to the job.

"You go to the stadium and you are accorded free access, and you sit in the most comfortable place. That is the most exciting thing about it. I feel good when I am on duty," said a proud Katsande.

He said he even applied for a job on radio when he was only in Form Two and was told to wait until he had completed his school studies.

"At that time, I used to listen to the likes of Webster Shamu, James Makamba, Wellington Mbofana, Ishmael Kadungure, Nisbert Nasasara and Jane Isso. Those were the fashionable guys then," said Katsande.

His breakthrough came in 1990 when, after going through his auditions, he was given the opportunity to handle the match between Black Aces and Black Mambas at

Stanely Katsande



Morris Depot, with Charles Mabika as his partner.

"I was a ball of nerves. Luckily, I was paired with Charles Mabika, who helped me settle down. He told me everything was going well out there," said Katsande.

Katsande's first time alone in the commentary box came later that same year, when he handled the big match between Black Rhinos and Dynamos.

"My friends who listened to the show said it was great. I felt good to be told that. I was happy that I had passed that test," said Katsande.

That was the beginning of the great Stanley Katsande we know today — a commentator who is accurate with figures and statistics and is a good describer of players and teams' styles of play.

He revealed that he has a team that he supports locally but has kept it a military secret to avoid disappointing some of his listeners.

Katsande never played football at the highest level but followed the Zimbabwean game with passion.

He says criticism has made him stronger and forced him to work even harder, although some of it has been unfair.

"We do this job for these people. These are the consumers of our product. When they talk about the way we are doing our job, it's simply feedback. It must be taken in good faith," said Katsande.

He has some advice for aspiring soccer commentators.

"The first thing is, you have to have it in you. You should have that feeling that I could be a good radio and television presenter. It has to come from within," advises Katsande.

A father of four — three girls and a boy — and now a great-grandfather, Katsande says he grew up in Highfields and uses his mother's surname, Katsande.

His father is Amon Mutanho, while his mother is Marble Katsande.

"My parents separated when I was around five and I went to live with my mother. I adopted my mother's surname, but my real second name should be Mutanho. My father has an A1 farm near Cornerstone, and that is where I call my rural home," he said.

COACH OF



KELVIN KAINDU
(HARDROCK FC)

PLAYER OF



PRINCE KAINDU
(HARDROCK FC)

CAN YOU NAME ME?



I won the 2023 and 2024 Castle Lager Premier Soccer League titles coaching two different teams. Who am I?

Inbox your answers to the Castle Lager ZW Facebook page for a chance to win one of TEN cases of Castle Lager!