

INGWE TIMES
AFC Leopards Official Monthly e-newsletter
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EDITORIAL.

It sounds just like the other day but believe it not, one month is already gone since we posted the inaugural newsletter. To keep the fire burning, issue two is just as sizzling hot as the first one, this time getting close and personal with the current captain of AFC Leopards Francis Xavier in the fast gaining popularity Q&A section. He reveals his burning desire to steer his side back to the Kenya Premier League and his liking for Leopards all time great Wilberforce Mulamba. You will also read about the club's rescheduling of the much anticipated corporate launch to give supporters and members more time to take advantage of the unprecedented private placement offer. To spice up the issue, we introduce a new *player's profile* section which will be alternating with *blast from the past* section. The lucky player to grace this mouth watering section is the team's dependable player Ben Barasa popularly known as *Babake* to denote his unequalled leadership qualities. The show stopper is arguably the country's most popular soccer fan going by the name of Juma. On reading the story, you will be in sighted with this Nakuru based cobbler's influence on local football that has made him travel several miles in and outside Kenya to represent his club AFC Leopards and the national team Harambee Stars in crucial ties. Enjoy.

Richard Ekhalie (editor)

MAIN NEWS STORY

AFC Leopards Corporate Launch Postponed.

The much anticipated transformation of AFC Leopards from a society to a company limited by shares has been pushed to October from the initial August date. The shift has been necessitated by the club's members request for more time to mobilise resources that will enable them take advantage of the offer only available to members.

Several unregistered fans of "ingwe" also asked for more time to register as members before investing in the club. Consequently, the newly elected executive office under the chairmanship of Alex Ole Magelo has embarked on extensive member recruitment drive to boost the club's grass root presence.

"We have summoned all the active branches countrywide to clean up their register with the view to incorporating a formidable national branch network" said the secretary general, Micah Luvutse. Before relegation from top flight soccer, AFC Leopards boasted of the country's widest branch network of over 100 branches, with some active branches reported in the USA and Europe.

According to the promoters of the corporate agenda, AFC Leopards Management Board, the main purpose of the launch still remains the unveiling of the new brand and corporate structures of the company. Highlights of the new brand identity include a new modern logo and tagline that resonates with the larger than life Leopards diverse fan base throughout the continent and world wide.

The function will also mark the official launch of the website which is for sure going to revolutionise the way football business is done in Kenya.

Also lined up for the launch is a merchandise line including supporters' shirts and caps in various colours and sizes. Provision for fancy ladies spaghetti tops and children wear will be made. A special Legends line will also be unveiled featuring a Joe Kadenge artistic impression.

On the corporate structure, an elaborate share scheme will be unveiled asking AFC Leopards registered members to buy in.

Q & A.

Interview with AFC Leopards SC Captain Francis Xavier



Q. How long have you been at the club?

A. I have been playing for the club since 2001, save for 2004/5 season in which I turned out for Mumias Sugar FC before returning 'home' – to the club I admire. That makes me the longest serving player in the current team.

Q. So, why do you like the club?

A. I'm proud to be part of the club's rich heritage and furthermore, I've supported AFC Leopards since my childhood.

Q. Then how does it feel to captain such a team?

A. Its an honour to lead our young boys, and its good to see them prosper and become achievers.

Q. Who's been your greatest inspiration in the previous AFC Leopards squad?

A. Wilberforce Mulamba. He was what I'd call a complete player. Since he was skilful, a renowned dribbler and also an accomplished goal scorer.

Q What are your aspirations for the club?

A. I'd like the team to, first and foremost, qualify for next season's premier league that now has sponsorship and its broadcast

internationally. This will help our players to be exposed internationally. Once there, work hard to win the premiership since we already have a name and a history.

Q. Which playing pattern do you prefer?

A. I prefer the 3-5-2 system. It's an attack minded system and so it provides goals and entertainment. Furthermore, this pattern does not restrict me, especially as a defensive midfielder, to a defensive role but affords an opportunity to participate in attack.

Q. In the current team, which player do you perceive capable to inspire others?

A. Ben 'Babake'. He is hardworking, and spirited, in that, he's got a "never-say-die" attitude even when we are down; he doesn't give up.

Q. Any accolades?

A. Yes, mainly as member of a team. These are; Winner medals for the Moi Golden Cup in 97 (with Eldoret KCC) and AFC Leopards (2001). Runner Up at the Nairobi edition of 2002(Castle Cup), plus a call up to the national team beginning with the national youth team for the Gothia Cup in Sweden.

Q. Which was your most 'crucial' match?

A. All our derbies against our arch rivals Gor Mahia. This is because our rivalry elicits excitement and a will to perform. Another tough match was our clash against against Al-Mourada of Sudan in the 2002 CAF Cup, especially the return match in Khartoum.

Q. Any Word, for the soccer fraternity?

A. I'd appeal to our community to come together and support the club morally and materially, and give support to our chairman. This will make our work as players easy. In this regard, I'd also like to thank the few dedicated fans who have committed themselves to support the club wholeheartedly.

Q. What next, after AFC?

A. I plan to concentrate with youth programmes, because I like nurturing talent. I know I can perform well with the youth programmes and later become a coach. As a coach, I will be able to achieve what I didn't accomplish as a player.

PLAYER PROFILE.

Ben 'Babake' Barasa is an industrious midfielder who can read the game very well and can quickly turn defence to attack. Especially, with the momentarily unavailability of inspirational Francis Xavier, the team's need of a dependable playmaker to fill this gap has been answered by Babake who's proven to be a promising player and a leader among his team-mates - hence the nickname. His style of play; combining decisive passes with good control of the ball and dribbling efforts, have led him to be considered by many as one of the most talented players in the country. He previously played for unheralded Bungoma United but has really found his feet after joining the Leopards in late May; making an immediate impact by scoring on his debut and progressively establishing himself in the midfield. His trademark assertive runs from midfield often disrupting opposing defences as well as a box-to-box midfield play make him an important figure both in 'ingwe's' defence and attack. These qualities plus his discipline have made him to continue to perform to expectation even making him to be briefly considered for the national team. Nonetheless at the appropriate time, the door will open and his national call-up will come.



PITCH FEVER

The amazing topless Juma

(in the middle with AFC Leopards' tacticians)



He is the most travelled soccer fan in Kenya alive having attended almost all competitive soccer games involving AFC Leopards before relegation and the national team to date. His last sojourn with his favourite club in Kenya was in June during Madaraka Day when he

prevailed at Nyayo Stadium to watch “Ingwe” narrowly go down to perennial arch rival Gor Mahia FC. Although given competition by the late entrant in soccer madness one *Spider man* who kept on stealing the lime light from him, Juma maintained his cool and did his signature uninterrupted topless dance to the tune of energised Isukuti drummers. He was not to miss the opportunity to shake the hands of the Prime Minister Raila Odinga and his deputy Musalia Mudavadi who graced the occasion to show solidarity with the country’s most supported soccer clubs. But who is this man Juma? Although information about him is scanty, Juma is a well known residence of Nakuru town whose eight to five job entails repairing shoes for Nakuru residents. He traces his origin from Mumias district in Western Kenya, the bedrock of his team AFC Leopards. In a recent interview with one of the dailies, he disclosed how his love for football has earned him a lot of respect from admirers who consider him as God send during crucial matches. As part of his social responsibility, he communicates various topical issues on his bare body through catchy gravity that normally gets the attention of the mainstream media. Some of his favourite topics include HIV AIDS and Corruption. He is on record as having claimed that he poses some super natural powers that he can evoke to qualify for a win for his team. His charms, consistence and pitch antiques have earned him sponsorship from various quarters including a free travel deal with Molo Line Road Service plying the Nakuru-Nairobi road. The deal entitles him to a free road travel to Nairobi as long as he advertises the name of the company on his topless body during the journey and match. He has on various occasions accompanied the national team to international assignments to inspire the home boys. Although his demeanour might deceive one to think that he is a teenager, Juma is in his forties, married with kids.

*If you know any real supporter of the Club (Dead or Alive!) or someone who did something crazy, please send your contribution to **Pitch Fever** and we shall feature him or her in this column.*