



# My United



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# My United

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# WELCOME



**W**elcome to the first edition of the ZESCO United Football Club newsletter for, and from Zambia. This publication brings you news and information on latest developments taking shape at the club as spearheaded by ZESCO United management.

This newsletter is above all a platform for sharing information related to ZESCO United's work in growing the club and contributing to the growth of the Zambian game through the promotion of good governance, transparency, and fair play.

Every three months, we will share what we consider some of the best, most important and interesting stories emerging from the club. We will also highlight some of our favorite stories and update our broad network of partners within and outside the country on developments taking place at the club as our team participates in both local and international games.

We will be dipping into our rich trove of initiatives and stories emerging from the on-going work at ZESCO United and bringing you news of upcoming football events and reports from past ones, as well as providing in-depth feature articles generated by our communications team.

In this edition, we take you down-memory-lane to what has been an exciting season for the 2020/21 league champions and a special up-close with ZESCO United's promising striker, Enock Sakala junior. We further share with you our readers, ZESCO United and Atlasmara Bank's corporate social responsibility work in the City of Ndola and other interesting stories.

Lastly, we bring a special message from ZESCO United football club Chairman, Webster Musonda. We welcome your questions, suggestions and ideas that could help us tailor this newsletter to make it even more meaningful to you our audience.

ZUFC  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
**RICHARD KABWE MULENGA**



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# CHAIRMAN

## Message



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to our first edition of the ZESCO United football club newsletter.

As part of our on-going efforts to communicate regularly and ensure that there is a sustained relationship between ZESCO United management and you our valuable stakeholders, the club will continue to invest and use effective communication channels that will constantly keep everyone abreast with developments taking shape at the club aimed at improving football standards in Zambia.

The year 2020 ended on a disappointing note with the club's failure to defend the Zambian super league title, losing its place in the CAF inter-club competitions in the process. However, like a phoenix rising from its ashes, ZESCO United rose from its doldrums in style winning the FAZ/MTN 2020/21 league season with a 16-point gap and retained its place in CAF interclub competitions.

This achievement symbolizes this institutions ethos of hard work and excellency. This success restored our status as the country's biggest football club and the continents emerging giant. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the ZESCO United football club technical staff and players for emerging league champions for the 9th time.

The 2021/22 league season is within sights. ZESCO United will be competing in the league and will also be the country's envoy the CAF champions league.

With this big task ahead of us, ZESCO United management will work tirelessly to ensure that the club prepares adequately for what promises to be an interesting season for the league champions.

We are profoundly excited with the developments that continue to take shape at this great football club. Last season we saw the team canter away with the title with great success owing to the contribution of several young players who joined us from other clubs and our own feeder teams.

ZESCO United management is particularly happy that the club has started to

directly benefit from its developmental teams which have been set up to act as a conveyor belt for the club's future stars.

I wish to reiterate that the success of ZESCO United is anchored on giving homegrown players priority in line with our mandate to promote Zambian football.

Last season, Enock Sakala, Samuel Sikaonga, Samson Mkandawire and John Chishimba showed us that with the right approach, investment, we can build our own success story from within our surroundings.

I am very happy that this month, ZESCO United conducted trials for our developmental teams continuing with our tradition of developing and promoting players to our senior team.

Before I conclude, I wish to congratulate our head coach Numba Mumamba for guiding ZESCO United football club to a 9th league title in his first season as club coach.

I wish to further take this opportunity to thank our shirt sponsor, AtlasMara Bank for being an all-weather friend. The success attained last season wouldn't have been possible without your support.

May I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Club Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Richard Kabwe Mulenga, and his team for a job well done. Do not relent in your continued pursuit of success at domestic and continental level.

To all our ardent soccer lovers, we are grateful for your unwavering support and dedication towards the growth of this club.

ZUFC Chairman  
**Webster Musonda**





## CURTAINS FINALLY CLOSE ON THE CHAMP: JACOB BANDA BIDS FAREWELL

The 2020/21 Zambian Super League season marked the end of a lifelong relationship between Jacob Banda and ZESCO United Football Club.

Having spent sixteen years at the club, Banda ended his career in style having featured in the team's concluding league fixture against Buildcon which ZESCO United crowned league champions for the ninth time.

In an age where even the biggest, most impressive of stars can be lured away from their footballing home if the price is right, Banda's allegiance to one team for the last

16-years has surely won him the cult hero status among ZESCO United fans.

He falls in the same category of legends like former Power Dynamos goalkeeper, Blackwell Chalwe, Manchester United winger, Ryan Giggs, AC Milan defender, Paulo Maldini, AS Roma striker Francesco Totti, and Zamalek striker Hamada Emam whose love for their boyhood dream teams still remains unquestionable.

"I have always been a big fan of ZESCO United. However, I was motivated to be a goalkeeper by former Real Madrid goalkeeper, Iker Casillas. I was a big follower of Madrid between 2001 and 2002."

Banda walks away from ZESCO United's historic home stadium, Trade Fair Grounds, with his head high having won eight Super League titles, two Mosi Cup titles, One Coca Cola Cup title and Six Absa Cups and four Charity Shield titles.

His final time at the club was spiced up with ZESCO United's resounding 0-3 victory over their cross town rivals Forest Rangers.

“ I have great memories which I think made me excel as a goalkeeper at ZESCO United. One of my outstanding performances was against Power Dynamos in 2006, a game we won 1-0. We also beat Al Merrick 2-3 in Sudan in the CAF Champions League in 2009 with Jonas Sakuwaha scoring a hat-trick. ”



"I wish to give thanks to the ZESCO United Football Club Management and Executive, the soccer fans, the media, coaches and the players. Without their support, I wasn't going to achieve all that I have gained in the last 16-years at the club.

I leave the club with a peaceful mind knowing that ZESCO United is in safe hands with Ian Otieno and Toaster Nsabata between the sticks. Thank you once again," Banda said.

Banda's journey in the game is a collection of determination, focus, sacrifice and discipline.

21-years ago, Banda set out on a career path that promised very little for a young man who had decided to abandon his education career.

Football once regarded as a sport for young people who didn't have a future beyond a classroom was to be Banda's first choice.

16-years later, Banda is arguably the most decorated player and goalkeeper to have ever played for ZESCO United Football Club.

The ZESCO United shot stopper honed his goalkeeping skills in the dusty streets of Ndola's Ndeke Township before successfully penetrating the youth ranks at Indeni Football Academy.

"My first stint as a goalkeeper was with Indeni Academy. I was later selected to be part of the Indeni main team. It wasn't easy because I found experienced goalkeepers like Steven Munkonga who at that time was the first-choice goalkeeper. I had to wait for my opportunity but that also meant showing that I was worth the call."

Widely respected purely for his talent between the sticks, it was just a matter of time before Banda could be on the cards of one of the big hitters in Ndola town.

In 2005, ZESCO United won promotion to the Super League. The Ndola based side was meteorically pacing its way to the top of the Zambian game.

This development meant that the team had to make some signings that could make their stay in the topflight of the Zambian game longer.

"I signed for ZESCO United in 2005 under Coach Fredrick Ngwenya. It was a dream come true for me because, at that time, every young boy in Ndola wanted to play for ZESCO United. This was also the biggest test of my career because the club had some good goalkeepers. There was

Emmanuel Musichili, Steven Munkonga, Ken Mumba. I had to work my way to the top because I was signed as a fourth choice goalkeeper."

With ZESCO United's goalkeeping department well marshalled by the experienced Musichili and Munkonga, Banda had to wait a bit longer for his time. A change in coaches saw the late Wesley Mondo take up the reigns at ZESCO United.

"I enjoyed some game time when the late Wesley Mondo was appointed head coach. He loved rotating goalkeepers. This gave me a very big opportunity to show that I can be trusted between the sticks."

An outstanding performance against Power Dynamos and El Merrick of Sudan, and a rare maiden appearance at the U-20 FIFA World Cup competition held in Canada, set Banda on a path to greatness.

"I have great memories which I think made me excel as a goalkeeper at ZESCO United. One of my outstanding performances was against Power Dynamos in 2006, a game we won 1-0. We also beat Al Merrick 2-3 in Sudan in the CAF Champions League in 2009 with Jonas Sakuwaha scoring a hat-trick.

In 2007, I was the first choice goalkeeper for the Zambia U-20 national team that qualified for the 2007 U-20 World Cup. I think people started to notice that I was a good goalkeeper."

Banda's light has shone brightly not just for his talent between the sticks but also for his leadership skills. As club captain, he has been able to keep the dressing room together in an age where football is largely dominated by superstar egos.

"I am very lucky to be captain of this side. However, it is not easy because you have to deal with players with totally different backgrounds and nationalities. I am happy because I have a good relationship with everyone and we all respect each other."

Banda's remarkable journey at ZESCO United is a story and lesson worth replicating especially for young players with high hopes of acquiring legendary status at a massive institution like ZESCO United.



## ZESCO UNITED, ATLASMARA DONATES TO THE LESS PRIVILEGED IN SOCIETY

It has become a seasonal ritual for ZESCO United Football Club and the club's shirt sponsor, Atlasmara Bank to extend a helping hand to the vulnerable in society.

The 2020/21 Zambian Super League season ended on a high with ZESCO United being crowned league champions for the 9<sup>th</sup> time.

This was a great come-back for a club that a season ago surrendered the title to Nkana in very difficult circumstances.

ZESCO United's title triumph was a sign of reassurance to the club's sponsors that the team will strive to be at the summit of the Zambian.

The champions league success also provided a moment for the team to give back to the people of Ndola who at the core of supporting the team whether rain or shine.

Last month, ZESCO United Football Club in partnership with Atlas Mara Bank donated assorted items worth 50,000 kwacha to three charitable organizations based in Ndola.

The targeted organizations are St Anthony Children's Village, Mitanda home for the aged and Child Life orphanage.

Speaking during the handover ceremony, ZESCO United Chief Executive Officer, Richard Mulenga commended the three charitable organizations for supporting the vulnerable in society.

Mulenga said St Anthony children's Village, Mitanda Home for the aged, and Child Life Touch orphanage have been instrumental in saving and changing the lives of the vulnerable in society.

"These three organizations are a big reminder to us all about the many hurdles that continue to haunt our communities. They are a further reminder to us all that our well-being depends on caring for others. ZESCO United Football Club takes this moral responsibility very seriously."

Mulenga further added that ZESCO United will



continue to work tirelessly to enhance the country's social economic development.

"It is worthy highlighting that ZESCO United values the existing relationship between the club and the surrounding community. As such our corporate social responsibility is designed not only to create employment opportunities for the locals but also to give back to communities in which we exist. The club strongly believe that philanthropic work is a sure way of giving back to the people of Ndola for their unwavering support towards the growth of the club."

And speaking on behalf of Atlas Mara Chief Executive Officer, Bank Marketing and Corporate Communication Manager, Eric Ngondo said the bank was motivated to support the three-organization due to their dedication supporting the vulnerable in society.

"We identified these three organizations because of their passion to assist the vulnerable in crisis.

We are aware that, these facilities look after children from different backgrounds who include street kids, kids who have been abandoned, runways from homes due to various reasons such

as, abusive households, victims of human trafficking and other sad situations they encounter in their day to day lives.

Through this partnership we hope to contribute to these facilities and help raise awareness about the great work they are doing to improve the well-being of vulnerable children and the aged."

Meanwhile St Anthony's Children's village Program Manager, Sister Lucia Muchelenje expressed gratitude for the gesture which she said will go a long way in helping vulnerable in society.

Author: Desmond Katongo

**"It is worthy highlighting that ZESCO United values the existing relationship between the club and the surrounding community"**





## ZESCO UNITED SETS PACE ON FOREIGN PLAYER QUOTAS AS FAZ ACTIVATES CLAUSE

Zambian Super League giants, ZESCO United Football Club have been known to be the nation's leader in both the domestic and international game.

The club has in the last forty-seven years seen its fortunes take a huge turn in the game from being among the nations footballing nonentity to becoming the country's football powerhouse and an emerging continental giant.

The Ndola based league giants have won 9 league titles and are the record holders of the Absa Cup championship having won it 6 times.

ZESCO United have also been the country's perennial participants in the CAF Champions league and Confederation Cup, reaching the semi-finals and quarterfinals stage of both

competitions respectively.

The rise and rise of the club on and off the pitch has largely been as a result of sound strategic policies developed by the club's Board and Management.

This is evident through numerous achievements the club has scored in the last two decades. ZESCO United are the first Zambian club to attain the Club Licensing requirements as per FIFA and CAF requirement.

On the local front, the institution has been brave in making radical policy decisions aimed at benefiting the club and the Zambian game at large.

Late last year, ZESCO United Chief Executive Officer, Richard Kabwe Mulenga, announced the club's decision to limit the number of foreign players to 5, becoming the first team in Zambia to take such an infamous stance.

"I wish to inform our strategic stakeholders, especially ZESCO United fans that we are mandated by the ZESCO United Football Club board to reduce the number of foreign players to 5 by the end of 2021. This process has already started as part of preparations for us to reach this

target," Mulenga said.

ZESCO United's success in the last two decades has been dependent largely on sound sponsorship from its parent company, ZESCO Limited and its current shirt sponsors such as Atlasmara Bank and other corporate sponsors.

This financial strength gave the club the edge to compete with the best locally and internationally by stretching their player recruitment arm beyond the borders of Zambia.

ZESCO United opened its doors to many budding foreign players with an insatiable appetite to make an indelible mark in the game.

The club provided a window of opportunity to players coming as far as West, Central, East Africa including Asia.

This open-door policy stance taken on foreign player recruitment contributed immensely to the growth of the club both at domestic and international level.

On the contrary, the influx of foreign players pushed the club's wage bill sky-high. This decision also hampered prospects of home-grown players and young players from the club's developmental teams from commanding a first team place in the main team.

"It is worth acknowledging that foreign players have had a positive impact on this club. They have contributed immeasurably to the growth and success of the club.

However, it is also crucial for us to look at the cost of doing business in this current environment. Furthermore, there are strategic policies that the Football Association of Zambia are currently looking at. One of these is the introduction of foreign player quotas. As a club, we don't want to be caught off-guard when these things are finally implemented," Mulenga said.

Being trendsetters in the Zambian game, ZESCO United managements intuitions on keeping the number of foreign players to 5, was this year reaffirmed by the Football Association of Zambia's (FAZ) decision to introduce a clause in the constitution that mandates all its members to admit only 5 foreign players.

This shift in policy has so far yielded tangible benefits for 2020/21 league champions. Before the start of the 2020/21 league campaign, ZESCO United released several of its foreign players paving way for several homegrown players including young players from developmental teams.

"The club has put in place strategic measures to

ensure that this process is executed smoothly. For example, Kelvin Kampamba was strategically brought in to ensure that there is cover in the midfield in case one of our midfielders left the club at the end of this year.

Bruce Musakanya is another creative midfielder that the club recently signed to provide similar cover," Mulenga disclosed.

The club's top chief added that ZESCO United was morally obligated to develop football in Zambia by ensuring that home-grown players are given an opportunity to excel both at local and international level.

"It remains our mission to bring the best players to ZESCO United Football Club. This change in policies will also give our home-grown players an opportunity to play for the biggest club in the land and a rare platform to shine at both local and international level.

This is evident through the promotion of 4 home-grown players who have graduated from the ZESCO United youth team to the senior side and currently playing first team football. The club has also brought in two more young players from other clubs.

Apart from providing an opportunity to homegrown players to shine at local and international level, the clubs 2020/21 league triumph was spearheaded by six young players who before the start of the league campaign hardly played super league football or commanded a place in the ZESCO United starting eleven.

ZESCO United have embarked on a massive club transformation on and off the pitch which has already started with winning the clubs 9th league title under the 5 foreign player quotas. The club's management is so far energized by the policy outcome.

"It is our aim to ensure that our feeder teams remain efficient and effective in producing future stars of the club. This quota will also help us save a lot of resources and limit our focus on spending resources on some of the finest talent on the continent."



# CHAMPIONS

2020/21





# WERE *Jesse* 100 IS A CENTURY AHEAD

Tall, dark, lanky figure are some of the features that characterizes Kenya international and ZESCO United striker, Jesse Jackson Were.

Six years ago, Were made a switch to ZESCO United after having spent years at Mathare United and Tusker Football Club.

Were joined a list of the ever growing number of foreign players who have made Zambia their best destination to develop their careers in the game.

A natural gifted striker with a razor-sharp eye for goals, Were has been one of the best foreign acquisitions to grace the Zambian game.

He is also one of the best players ZESCO United have signed in the last decade helping the team to win several titles in the process.

The tall lanky striker has been a menace to defenders in both the domestic league and continental football.

Since joining ZESCO United, the 32-year-old goal poacher has been one the all-time leading goal scorers for the club and a big fan favorite.

Last season, Were was the main architect of ZESCO United's resounding 4-0 victory over the FAZ/MTN Super League relegated side Kitwe United.

The Kenyan put three goals past a helpless Haverson Chinganbu to take his goal tally for the club to 100.

Were was a relieved man after contributing three goals to a side that was on its way towards getting crowned 2020/2021 FAZ/MTN Zambian Super League Champions.

"I would like to thank God for this opportunity and for giving me this chance to play for ZESCO

United. It is a massive milestone in my career. Getting a century of goals for the club makes me feel very happy and motivated especially when I look at the way the team is playing," Were said.

Getting a century goals for the club was one of the strikers' all-time achievements and a dream come true.

"When you leave your home one usually goes searching and I thank God that the searching is over especially that I have put in 100 goals for the team. I am positive there will be a lot to come.

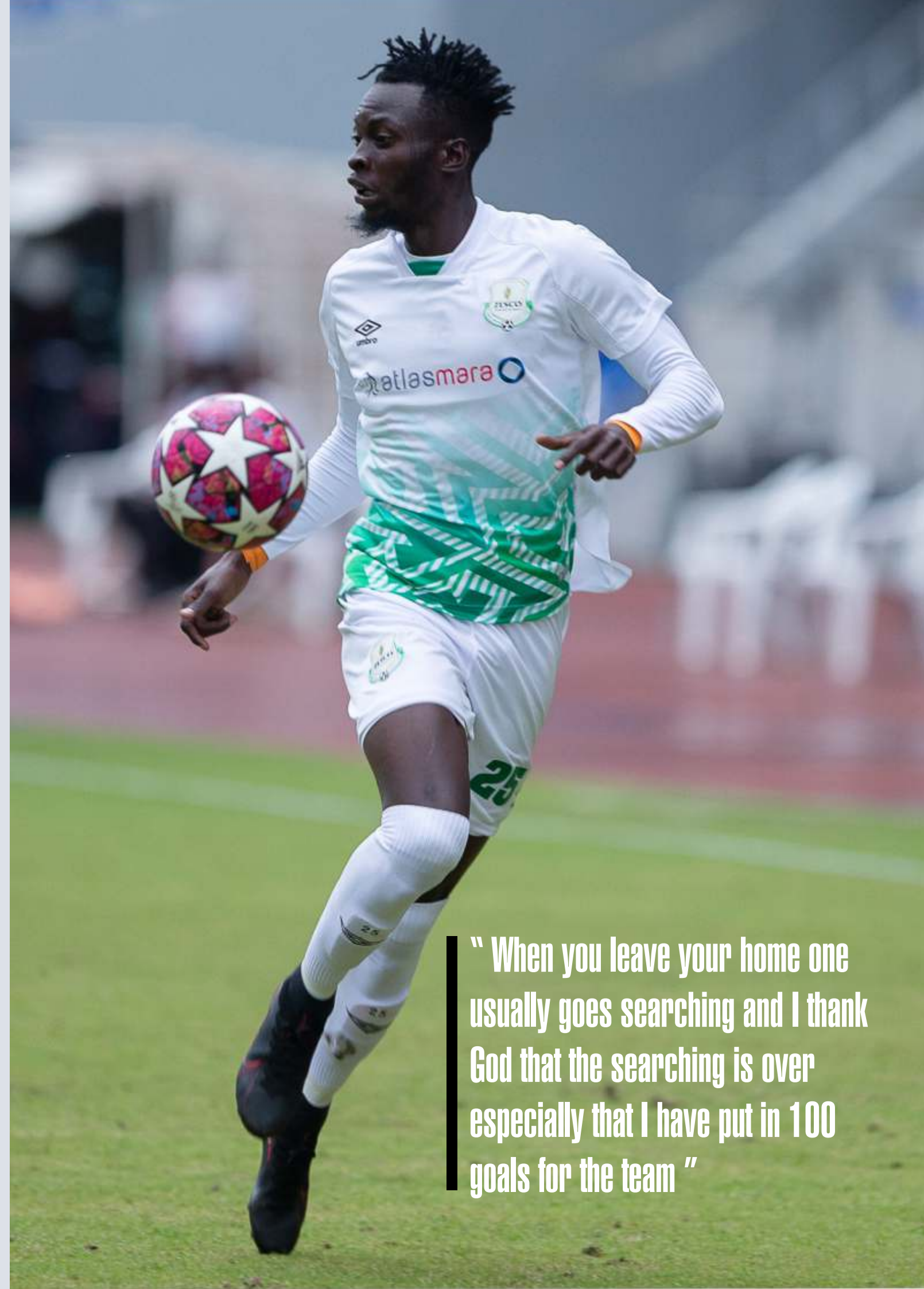
This gives me a lot of appetite to do more for the club and motivates me to work hard. Working behind the scenes is very tough for a player especially that you are required to translate that on the pitch on matchday. I am happy and at ease that all my efforts haven't been in vein," Were added.

The Kenyan international striker thanked teammates and the club's technical bench for helping him achieve a century goals.

"I wish to thank my teammates and the technical bench for their support and for encouraging me in good and bad times. It hasn't been an easy season for me but with everyone's support, I have kept on pushing. I am very happy I have managed to achieve this milestone. I am motivated to work even harder."

Were ended the 2020/21 league season as the club's seasonal top goal scorer surpassing Enock Sakala and Kelvin Kampamba who had led the chats for most parts of the season.

The Kenyan will be salivating for another exciting league season when the champions mount another league title chase and champions league success.



**" When you leave your home one usually goes searching and I thank God that the searching is over especially that I have put in 100 goals for the team "**



## A debut season of highs and lows: The Inside story of how Numba Mumamba guided ZESCO United to a ninth league title and revolutionized the club's culture



On September 22, 2020 at exactly 5:00 pm, ZESCO United Football Club Media department announced the departure of seasoned Zambian coach George Lwandamina from the club following a disappointing league season that saw the 2018/2019 league champions surrender the title to the Wusakile Boys, Nkana.

"ZESCO United Football Club management and club head coach, George Lwandamina have mutually agreed to separate with immediate effect. Club management would like to thank Lwandamina for his services in the last three seasons which resulted in the team winning two league titles and one Absa cup trophy," Club Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Richard Mulenga said in a media statement.

Mulenga further disclosed that the club would be announcing a new full-time head coach ahead of the 2020/2021 FAZ/MTN Super League season.

The 2019/2020 league campaign ended prematurely following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fearing an increase in Covid-19 cases, the Football Association of Zambia (FAZ) decided to suspend the league with only seven games to play.

That decision from the local football governing body saw ZESCO United abdicate the league throne they had occupied for three consecutive seasons, finishing outside the top two for the first time since 2012 and further missing out on CAF Inter-Club qualification for the first time since 2013.

Mulenga shook hands with Lwandamina and parted ways in an amicable and professional manner having worked together in transforming the fortunes of the team on two separate occasions.

News of Lwandamina's departure filtered through the airspace. Both Facebook and

WhatsApp were awash with the veteran gaffer's exodus from the club.

Journalists and bloggers went to town in their quest to deliver both the impending news of the next coach and Lwandamina's next destination.

There was speculation of a foreign coach taking the wheels at ZESCO United with many attributing such expectation to the fact that the club is the country's footballing giant. A few names from the local scene were also thrown into the fray.

ZESCO United is a massive football institution that echoes the sounds and exudes the oomph of a modern African club emerging from the rough terrains of the continent.

Largely funded by the parent company ZESCO Limited, the club has managed to find its footing among the emerging giants of the African game.

The club's success has been firmly rooted in the management structure of the team that includes some of the best and brightest minds in organisational management.

ZESCO Limited has not only been a dedicated supporter of the club financially but also provides the best human resource that sits at both the club's board and executive committee level.

With an umbilical cord firmly rooted in ZESCO Limited management, giving way to the sharing of knowledge and expertise, ZESCO United has in the last two decades taken the domestic game by storm.

This relationship, anchored on excellency and hard work, is a template that guides who leads the team on the technical bench. As such, choosing the next head coach to lift the club from its doldrums wasn't going to be an easy task for the club's top chiefs.

Before Lwandamina's departure was made public, the club's CEO was a busy man. Mulenga was a man running back and forth in a quest to find the best coach to replace the veteran gaffer.

It was a period of continuous consultation with the best football minds in the country, and those who have charged him with the responsibility of being at the helm of the nation's top team.

Like the white smoke that emerges from the chimney atop the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican, signaling that the cardinals have elected the new pope, Numba Mumamba was on September 25, 2020, at exactly 08:00am unveiled as the new head coach of the club, signing a three-year contract.

News of Mumamba's appointment was met with mixed emotions from various corners of the football spectrum.

Some thought he didn't have the pedigree to lift the club from its woes, while others felt ZESCO United needed a coach of his caliber given his previous record of success.

Mumamba's playing record places him toe-to-toe with some of the finest players to have emerged from the Zambian game in recent years.

The former Zambia National team midfielder honed his skills at Konkola Blades before moving to Zanaco Football Club in 1999. It was at Sunset stadium where his star shone brightly winning Zanaco's first four league titles.

Having helped transform Zanaco into a title-winning machine, Mumamba was granted cult-hero status by the fans, a relationship that eventually accorded him an opportunity to lead the Bankers as assistant coach in 2009.

After six years deputizing, Mumamba was in 2015 elevated to the position of head coach following the departure of Aggrey Chiyangi.

Mumamba's leadership skills and winning mentality as a player did not take long to show as a coach. In 2016, he led Zanaco to their seventh and last Super League title to date.

He further led the Bankers to their maiden Absa Cup title in 2017. Mumamba is also regarded as the first Zanaco coach to reach the Group stage of the CAF Champions League and





second to qualify for the Confederation Cup Group stage.

It is this Curriculum Vitae (CV) at one club that convinced the minds at ZESCO United management to go for the 42-year-old coach.

“Mumamba is one of the finest young coaches to have emerged from the Zambian game in recent years. He has managed at the top level of Zambian football and he knows the domestic game very well.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome him to ZESCO United. His track record of success is ideal to take this club forward,” Mulenga said after unveiling the new coach in front of the Zambian media.

Mumamba was granted the opportunity by the club to come with his entire technical bench. The soft-spoken gaffer chose to retain the second assistant coach, goalkeeper coach, physical trainer he had worked with for the sake of continuity and a smooth transition.

In addition, however, he sought the services of former Young Africans and Buildcon Football

club assistant coach, Noel Mwandila who joined as first assistant coach bringing in additional international experience.

The task for the new coach was to transform an ailing ZESCO United side that had seen most of its star players reach the cusp of their playing careers.

Mumamba also joined ZESCO United at time when management through the club's board had made a radical decision to reduce the number of foreign players to five.

Kelvin Kampamba joined on a two-year deal from Nkana while Bruce Musakanya also signed a two-year loan deal from Red Arrows.

Congolese striker, David Molinga joined from Congo after parting ways with Tanzania's Young Africans. Lazarus Phiri also made a one-year loan switch from Green Eagles to ZESCO United.

Donashano Malama and Tafadzwa Rusike also arrived shortly before Mumamba was appointed to the top job.

20-year-old Mukuka Chanda joined later, making a two-year loan move from Gomes while former Zanaco striker, Chitiya Mususu signed a two-year contract with the club.

The shift in policy saw Burundian midfielder Enock Sabumukama and goalkeeper, Tibahezwa Deudonne leave the club. Kenyan international defender David Owino Odhiambo and Ghanaian striker Adam Zikiru also parted ways with ZESCO United.

Former Zambian international and ZESCO United's most decorated goalkeeper Jacob Banda retired from the game, Misheck Chaila joined former league champions, Nkana, while veteran midfielder Kondwani Mtonga took up a coaching role with the youth team.

Mumamba was now geared towards progressing with a horde of young players who were agonisingly waiting for an opportunity to break ranks into the main team.

In his first media appearance, Mumamba declared his desire to build a successful ZESCO United side affixed on youth and experience. Enock Sakala 19, Samson Mkandawire 24, John Chishimba 19, Samuel Sikaonga 21 are some of the young stars whose future at the club had looked bleak under the previous regime where experienced trounced everything else.

“I am a coach who believes in working with young players and whose philosophy is anchored on giving young players an opportunity to develop. There are a lot of young good players here. I am ready to give them an opportunity to shine provided they show that they have what it takes to play for this football club.”

This declaration was music to the ears of most young players that had graduated from the club's youth system.

Mumamba further cautioned seasoned players against complacency and made it clear that there would be no sacred cows during his reign at ZESCO United.

ZESCO United 2020/2021 league campaign started with a 1-all draw against Napsa Stars.

Mumamba's start to life at the club would take a low turn after recording his first home defeat in the Ndola derby against ZESCO United's fiercest rivals, Forest Rangers shortly after.

ZESCO United would then go on to beat Lumwana Radiants 0-1 before demolishing Kabwe Warriors 2-0 in a thrilling encounter that saw Kelvin Kampamba bag his first brace for the club.

The former league champions then went on to lose 3-1 to Zanaco, marking Mumamba's first return to Sunset stadium where he served as player and coach.

ZESCO United's shaky start to the 2020/2021 league campaign would continue on matchday six.

A 90' minute debut goal from Enock Sakala ensured that the Ndola based league giants avoided a third defeat of the season at the hands of Green Buffaloes.

This wobbly start to the league campaign raised a lot of dust among the club's faithfuls. More questions surfaced when the team struggled to consistently collect maximum points even against the minnows of the Zambian game.

Mumamba and his technical bench agonised over their best starting eleven from a side which has been dominated by old and experienced players and recently elevated several young players to the senior team.

As the team was struggling to find the right chemistry, Mumamba had given six of the club's young players an opportunity to shine at the highest level of the Zambian game.

This was a drastic change in both culture and belief. Mumamba gave the belief that young players could occupy the front seat of this massive football institution and produce the same kind of output that veteran striker, Winston Kalengo was and is still known for.





As was once the case at Manchester United where Marcus Rashford had learned from the old and experienced Zlatan Ibrahimovic. Enock Sakala was banging in goals at will under the tutelage of Winston Kalengo.

By February 2021, ZESCO United had hit top gear. The swag was back and the demeanor of being the bully of the Zambian game percolated through the team.

Mumamba had rallied his side into believing that they were indispensable. A feat that has run through the fabrics of the club for the last two decades.

A visit at the Trade Fair grounds, the club's historical home ground now turned into an official training facility, gave one a glimpse of what it meant to be part of the team at that stage of the season.

Feelings of doubt had meteorically ebbed away and in their place: belief, greatness, and confidence took center stage.

A great sense of the inevitable was filtering through the minds of the technical bench and players. Though it is was too early to call, Mumamba and his players were fully aware of the possibility of running away with the championship well before the season ended.

The former league champions battered their way through 10 consecutive league wins opening up a ten-point gap at the summit of the league table with second placed Zanaco helplessly looking at their title ambitions wither with each passing phase.

ZESCO United had achieved this feat against some of the league's finest teams.

Buildcon, Power Dynamos, Forest Rangers, Lumwana Radiants, Kabwe Warriors, Zanaco, Green Buffaloes, Red Arrows, Indeni, Nkwazi were some of the victims of ZESCO United's unrelenting ruthlessness between February and May.

Mumamba's ability to start his first eleven with a mixture of youth and experience was having dramatic effects on the opposition.

There were several occasions during the season that some teams stood firm during most parts of their matches only to be unlocked in the last 10 minutes of the 90' minutes.

When the tide was too slow for Mumamba's liking, John Chingandu would pave way for Chanda Mukuka, Jesse Were for Enock Sakala and Luwawa Kasoma would be thrown into the fray to whip in pinpoint crosses.

It's this type of shuffling of players that proved unbearable for ZESCO United's opponents

Indeni, Power Dynamos, Zanaco, Nkwazi and Green Buffaloes are some of the sides that were left licking their wounds after holding their lines for most parts of their games against the league champions only to be put to the sword in the dying minutes.

The camaraderie on-and-off the technical bench also proved crucial to the side's success.

Mumamba's down-to-earth approach to management made everyone feel part of the project, including the club's top chiefs who would from time to time pitch some ideas to the ZESCO United coach.

During every game, team talks would be shared among the coaches ensuring that everyone has a greater share of input into the side. He was also not one to shy away from the media, both in victory or defeat.

ZESCO United's 2020/2021 league title triumph has been anchored on youth and experience. The six young players who have cemented their place in the ZESCO United squad have been a breath of fresh air.

Sakala scored some crucial goals at the finest hour. Kasoma delivered some jaw-dropping goals when one least expected.

Chanda was a beauty to watch. He dazzled teams with some fine footwork and a level of ingeniousness that could have earned him a place at Barcelona's La Masia de Can Planes.

Sikaonga stood firm in the middle of park whenever he was charged with the responsibility to protect the heart of the team. Mkandawire and Chishimba delivered every time they were called upon.

Kelvin Kampamba was a beast on the ball and delivered crucial goals for the side at very crucial moments.

However, it is Mumamba's wizardry in getting to the hearts and minds of young and experienced players, especially in difficult times, that has been remarkable for the entire season.

A case in point is when ZESCO United's unbeaten run came to an end with the club recording two consecutive league defeats which saw the gap at the top of the league table reduced to five.

After a rigorous morning session, Mumamba summoned ZESCO United's long serving players for a pep talk.

John Ching'andu, Simon Silwimba, Solomon Sakala, Winstone Kalengo, Marcel Kalonda and Clement Mwape were given the responsibility to provide leadership at that crucial hour of the season.

Having won several league titles between them, Mumamba wanted to see leadership from these men on and off the pitch.

The response from that pep talk was instant. ZESCO United went on to beat Lusaka Dynamos 0-1 in Lusaka before going down 0-3 at the hands of Prison Leopards in very controversial circumstances.

The champions would then demolish stubborn Kitwe United 4-0 before electrocuting Napsa Stars to be crowned 2020/2021 FAZ/MTN Super League champions elect with only three games remaining to the close of the league season.

ZESCO United would later get a barren draw against Green Eagles followed by a 2-1 victory over Young Green Eagles before summing up the league with a 2-7 victory against Buildcon to be officially crowned champions of the 2020/21 league season.

For Mulenga and the entire club executive at ZESCO United whose job it was to oversee that the new coach delivered accordingly, it has been a roller-coaster year of ups-and-downs. This began with rebuilding the team, bleeding young players and merging with experience, and finally ended in memorable triumph.

About the Author: Desmond Katongo is the ZESCO United Football Club Media and Public Relations Officer. He is also the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Media Officer.



# ENOCK SAKALA

## A STRIKER IS BORN

There are very few young players who exude the level of confidence that radiates from 19 year-old Enock Sakala, jnr. Sakala a product of the ZESCO United youth set-up, has seen his career in the game evolve from being a mere ball-boy to a rising star player for ZESCO United.

Born in 2001, in Eastern Province, Sakala jnr hardly thought he would ever fashion a career in the game. However, like many fledgling young stars, his love for the football began at an early stage in life.

"I was only 7- years old when I became an ardent follower of the game. I would play street football with my friends. My father also loved to bring DVDs of football matches and once bought for me a play station," Sakala recalls.

At a time when young players are looking for star players to emulate, Sakala jnr didn't have to look further afield for inspiration.

Sakala's father, Enock Sakala senior had already mastered the dark art of destroying teams with his lethal shooting boots and devastating heading abilities.

"Dad and I hardly talked about football. Actually he wanted me to focus very much on my education instead of football. Today I tell people that I joined the game not because my father was playing football at that time but because I whole-heartedly loved football. Despite that, I think he did partly contribute to my interest in the sport."

Enock Sakala senior was what one would call footballs journeyman. Sakala senior honed his footballing skills in Chipata at an amateur club called Galant Football Club owned by Indians.

A devastatingly brilliant striker, Sakala senior quickly saw his fortunes in the game take a

huge turn when he joined Ndola United in 1999 having spent a few months at Kitwe United.

A short and successful stint at Ndola United saw Sakala senior emerge top scorer at the end of the season, a feat that attracted the attention of the country's big football clubs.

"I moved from one club to another. I played for Ndola United and later moved to Green Buffaloes, Young Red Arrows and also spent some time at Nkwazi football club. This was a good and also difficult time for me.

I had not really settled which meant that my family also had to move around with me. At one point I stopped football and returned to Chipata. These were times when I would spend time watching football with my son."

In 2006, Sakala went back to Ndola and re-joined division 1 side Ndola United where he emerged top scorer once again at the end of the campaign.

ZESCO United couldn't resist the temptation of bring the lethal striker to Trade Fair Grounds: "I moved to ZESCO United in 2007 and we won our first league title. It was a good time for me and my family because we could finally settle down."

While Sakala senior was jostling for life from one football club to another, his son was slowly getting aroused by the aroma of being in the zone of a football player.

Sakala's decision to finally settle in Ndola and sign for ZESCO United would have a profound effect on his son's career in the game.

Ndola like many other towns on the Copperbelt is renowned for its' contribution to the growth of Zambian football. The City has produced a collection of star players who have graced the Zambian game both at local and international level.

As Sakala senior was making a mark at ZESCO United Football Club, Sakala junior was slowly finding his feet in the dust streets of Lubuto township.

"I would play street football with my friends from time to time. However, I started taking

football seriously when I started featuring for an academy in Ndola," Sakala junior recalls.

Sakala senior remembers discreetly watching his young son showcase his raw talent at Ndola Academy.

"I would secretly watch him play the game. He was terribly awful as a player and honestly I never thought he would get anywhere. When he returned home, I would often tease him

about his playing style. I didn't think he would mature as a player and become what he has become today."

Focus, patience and determination would see young Sakala join a more structured ZESCO United youth team.

"In 2012, I joined ZESCO United U-14. It wasn't easy for me because I had a lot to learn before I could finally find my feet. I had a lot of help from my teammates and also my coach, chalwe Kabamba."

In 2013, Sakala seniors curtains in the game finally came to a close. However, for the former National team and ZESCO United player, his script in the game couldn't have been complete without adding a touch of brilliance to his sons fledgling career.

"Dad coached me for half a year at ZESCO United youth team. This was awkward for me because he didn't really believe that I was supposed to be playing football. He wanted me to focus on school. It was a weird experience for me."

ZESCO United's strong youth structures would see Sakala jnr graduate from the club's U-15 to join the U-20.

During his entire period at the ZESCO United youth teams, Sakala would also operate as the club's ball-boy.

This life changing experience would bring him in close contact with some of the club's star players.

"It was motivating to watch some of the current star players at the club. I followed



Winstone Kalengo very closely and other senior players. It was an honour for me to be one of the ball-boys for the team. Watching Kalengo score goals for my boyhood favourite team motivated me to work extra hard," Sakala recalls.

Sakala steadily developed and thrived under the guidance of coach Clive Hachilensa and Nicolas Zulu.

In 2019 Sakala was among a horde of young players who graduated from the ZESCO United U-20 to the senior team.

This development, however didn't guarantee first team football for the young striker who was competing for numbers against more seasoned strikers like Winstone Kalengo, John Makwata, Jesse Were, Quadri Kola.

"I was very excited to move from the youth team to the senior team. This was a sign that I was making progress at the club. However, I didn't know when the opportunity to play was going to come especially that we have a lot experienced strikers at club."

A change in management at ZESCO United saw former Zanaco coach Numba Mumamba take over the reins from coach George Lwandamina.

This change in coaches provided the perfect opportunity for young Sakala to show the new coach that he was worth the call.

"I knew that the new coach was always going to give everyone an equal opportunity to show what they can offer. I took advantage of pre-season training to show him that I had what it takes to play for ZESCO United."

Sakala's hard work during pre-season paid dividends. Mumamba decided to name the 19-year old in his 22-man squad to face Kabwe Warriors at the Levy Mwanawasa stadium.

A taste of first team football was all Sakala wanted to strengthen his confidence: "It was amazing to be named in the team that faced Kabwe Warriors even if I only came in at the end of the game. That short opportunity encouraged me to work extra hard."

A 2-0 victory against Kabwe Warriors was the beginning of a memorable journey for the young striker who had perfected his skills in Lubuto.

Sakala was named in ZESCO United's starting eleven when the former league champions hosted Green Buffaloes. With the host losing the game, Sakala's perfectly timed header rescued ZESCO United from a potential home defeat.

The young striker went on to score ZESCO United's lone goal when the Ndola based league giants beat Kitwe United 0-1 at Garden Park stadium.

"It is an unbelievable feeling to score for your boyhood favourite team and also for a big team like ZESCO United. I am grateful to the coach for believing in me and also to the senior players who have been encouraging me to work hard," he said.

Sakala's exciting run in the game thus far has not made the young striker forget the ethos that have gotten him to where he is today.

"I am still the humble boy that I was before joining the senior team. I know too well that I am still developing as such discipline and focus remain key to my success. There are a lot of senior players that I am learning from here. People like Kalengo have been very helpful. I also listen a lot to the coach who gave me this rare opportunity to play for the team."

Enock Sakala senior and his son's story in the game justifies saying that an apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

"I am one person today who will religiously tell you that you can't predict another person's life. My son has been the biggest evidence. Today my friends call me to ask if he is the same Enock I would carry around every time we were playing or watching football. They can't believe it.

I tell him every day to focus and remain disciplined. My simple words to him are that he should respect football and football will respect him back."

# SUCCESS!!! CONGRATULATIONS ZESCO UNITED 2020-21 FAZ SUPER LEAGUE CHAMPIONS.



## OFFICIAL SPONSORS





# ZESCO UNITED STRENGTHENS SQUAD AHEAD OF BUSY FOOTBALL SEASON



Zambian Super League Champions, ZESCO United will begin their quest to defend the league title next month.

The champions will also be hoping to compete favorably in the CAF Champions League campaign in September when the coveted continental showpiece kicks off.

ZESCO United coach Numba Mumamba has had a wonderful start to life at the club winning his first league title in his debut season.

The 43-year-old gaffer will be looking forward to another productive football season with ZESCO United participating three titles in three different competitions.

In 2016, ZESCO United reached the CAF Champions League semi-finals, a feat that has eluded them for over five years. Mumamba will be hoping to raise the stakes in the new campaign.

With the record of being the first Zanaco coach to reach the Group stage of the CAF Champions League and second to qualify for the Confederation Cup Group stage, Mumamba will be hoping to retain ZESCO

United to the pinnacle of the African game by going beyond the Group stage of the competition.

Last season the league champions surrendered the Absa Cup title to Lusaka Dynamos on penalties. Mumamba will be dying to bag his first league cup when the competition resumes.

With ZESCO United racing in three competitive tournaments, what kind of ammunition will the Ndola based league giants carry to the war front?

So far Mumamba has overseen the departure of John Mark Makwata, Lazarus Phiri, Bruce Musakanya and Marcel Kalonda.

In their places, ZESCO United have so far signed former Kitwe United exciting Winger, Edward Lungu and Napsa Stars defensive midfielder Dickson Chapa, and Chitiya Mususu. Mumamba and ZESCO United management will be hoping to make some decent additions to the squad before the football season kicks off.



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## ATLASMARA REWARD ZESCO UNITED STAR PLAYERS

ZESCO United were unbelievably ruthless last season thanks to both teamwork and individual brilliance.

The 2020/21 league champions won their 9<sup>th</sup> league title in style trotting away with the trophy with three league games to spare.

Buildcon Football Club was the last side to put to be swept away by ZESCO United with a 7-2 score line marking the end to a season which had illuminated the latter's prowess in the domestic league.

In as much as teamwork played a crucial role in ZESCO United's league triumph, individual brilliance rallied the Ndola based league giants to their ninth league triumph.

Kelvin Kampamba's ability to carry the whole team on his back when the going got tough resulted in some hard fought out victories.

ZESCO United were also ruthless going forward. Despite not producing a league top scorer, Enock Sakala, and Jesse Were piped some wonderful goals at will.

At the back, Adrian Chama, Clement Mwape and Simone Silwimba strived to keep the backdoor shut.

The ZESCO United backline further broke conventional wisdom by leading the clubs goalscoring chat at the beginning of the season.

If ZESCO United conceded few goals during the entire league campaign, then Ian Otieno played a crucial role. The Kenyan international goalkeeper has been the perfect replacement for the club's veteran goalkeeper, Jacob Banda who retired last season.

Last season Otieno produced some eye-catching saves that proved vital in ZESCO United's quest to return the super league title.

As per tradition, ZESCO United in partnership with the club's shirt sponsor, Atlasmara Bank presented various awards to deserving players at an award gala held at Ndola's Protea hotel. ZESCO United shot stopper, Ian Otieno was presented with the Most consistent Player of the season accolade while Jesse Were won the club Top Scorer award.

Zimbabwean veteran midfielder, Thabani Kamusoko cantered away with the Most Disciplined Player award while Chanda Mukuka won the Young Player of the Year award.

ZESCO United attacking midfielder, John Chingandu, was the Players' Player of the Year while Adrian Chama won the Player of the Year Award.

And speaking on behalf of Atlas Mara Bank Chief Executive Officer, Bank Corporate Communication and Marketing Manager, Eric Ngondo said the Bank was pleased to have partnered with ZESCO United Football Club.

"When we sat down with ZESCO United Football Club to talk about the sponsorship for the 2020/21 season we were very impressed by their strategic plans for the future which included, winning the 20/21 Super Division Title which they have delivered.

They also assured us of further commercialization

of the club in line with Club Licensing standards across the Continent with the ZESCO United FC Media Team being the best across the Super Division disseminating news timely," Ngondo said.

Meanwhile ZESCO United Football Club Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Richard Kabwe Mulenga congratulated the players, technical bench for winning the 2020/21 league season.

Mulenga said the club's nine-times league triumph was in line with the institutions of ethos of hard work and excellency.

The Club CEO challenged the players to work hard in the next league seasons and CAF interclub competitions.

And speaking on behalf of club players, ZESCO United striker Jesse Were thanked the sponsors for supporting the team throughout the season.

"I wish to take this opportunity to thank the sponsors of the club for their continued efforts to grow the club. Our success couldn't have been possible without them. We will continue working hard."