By Jerry Rugamba

Rwanda's APR Women's Basketball Club (WBBC) has claimed their first-ever Zone 5 championship, edging past national rivals REG WBBC 82-68 in a gripping final in Nairobi, Kenya.

From the first whistle, APR set the pace. A commanding 22-12 opening quarter, sparked by a 9-0 run, put REG on the back foot. Forward Destiney Philoxy led the scoring at halftime with 12 points, giving the Army side a crucial edge.

REG fought back in the second half, briefly drawing level at 57-57, but APR responded with a decisive 23-11 run in the final quarter, pulling away to seal the win. "After qualifying, the trophy feels like a bonus. Everything clicked," said APR head coach Charles Mushumba.

Mushumba praised his players' resilience. "Playing six consecutive matches wasn't easy. But the team stayed calm, worked together, and executed our game plan. Defense alone cannot win games; we had to be efficient offensively. I'm proud we are heading to the WBLA as Zone 5 champions," he added.

The match was a display of skill and determination. APR's early dominance forced REG to chase the game, with three-pointers from Faustine Mwizerwa and Kristina King bringing REG close at 28-26. But APR responded with another scoring burst, stretching their lead to 12 points by halftime.

The third quarter saw a tense battle, with APR maintaining a narrow lead. Kamba Yoro Diakité's long-range shooting helped the team stay ahead, while REG's precise attacks kept the game competitive. In the final quarter, APR converted critical free throws and controlled the tempo, running away with the match.

"It was a team effort. REG played well, but we stayed focused and worked together for this victory," said APR player Yacine Diop.

APR will now represent Zone 5 at the 12-team Africa Women's Basketball League (WBLA) in Cairo, Egypt, from 5–15 December 2025.

Hosts Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) also booked their spot in the WBLA after an 89-81 overtime win against Burundi's Les Hippos, following a 75-75 draw in regulation. KPA assistant coach Dorcas Anyango emphasized the importance of mental strength moving forward.

With APR crowned champions and KPA also advancing, the stage is set for an exciting continental tournament. Rwanda’s women’s basketball is on the rise, and APR’s blend of skill, strategy, and composure promises a competitive showing in Cairo.