

Recently, Rwanda appointed German tactician Torsten Frank Spittler as new Amavubi head coach.

Now, if I understood a trojan horse, his appointment was already leaked. Sources had already made it public, without attempts to downplay the reports that the next Rwandan national soccer coach is from Germany.

On this point, the timing couldn't be more dramatic, in fact, a friend went as far as revealing that the German arrived into the country two weeks ago and was already residing somewhere in a hotel in the capital Kigali.

Indeed, without revealing other candidates who had applied for the same job, the local football body Ferwafa, announced Spittler as the new man to stir the ship.

Upon his appointment, the German became a topic of debate especially in the media, notably his rich resume that is yet to make a significant achievement for any national team.

Anyhow, to Rwandan soccer fans, the appointment sounded like jingle Bells coming from Ferwafa. Off we go....

In a press conference after holding his first training session with players on Sunday, the determined Spittler got off on a wrong footing. He popped up dressed in a black errea Ferwafa T-shirt, somebody forgot to dress him in the latest kit deal from Masita. As always!.

That apart, in his remarks, Spittler was quick to point out that there is a lot of talent in the team but we have to work to be prepared for the two upcoming matches.

"We don't have a lot of time left for the first match, the time is very short, there are a lot of topics (Issues) to work on, I hope we will show a performance in the two matches and good results" he said.

Determined to lead Rwanda by defending himself -the only one for it at this late stage, he also emphasized that he was the right man for the job despite the fact that his name is not popular in Africa football.

"I am not someone with a famous name, I'm someone who has now worked 30 years in football development, and Rwanda is a team that needs development." he pointed out.

Well, having been the football technical director in Mozambique and Sierra Leone, the German can claim to know African football inside out but his resume with African national teams leaves many of us to wonder?,just like Johnathan McKinstry, when he got his feet wet as Rwandan head coach.

Spittler's first assignment arrives next Wednesday November 15, when Rwanda is to embark on the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualification campaign with a pair of challenging games against Zimbabwe, and South Africa six days later.Both at the same venue Huye Stadium respectively.

Indeed, it's not all smooth sailing for the German, who takes the helm at a challenging juncture when the Wasps are at their lowest ebb.



Rwanda, is positioned in Group C alongside Nigeria, South Africa, Benin, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho.

Speaking about these games, the German tactician pointed out that he expects his team to show a good performance with good results but that won't come easily.

"Our main target is to win every game and be competitive. If those wins secure the team the ticket, we will take it," Just like that he boldly stated.

The 61 year old understands very well, Rwanda will be charging into a brick wall as the team seeks for a fresh direction, the prospect of qualifying from Group H are very slim, it was put to Spittler in exactly those terms.

Aware of the formidable task ahead, Spittler acknowledges, "We have to be realistic; Rwanda is lying 147th in the world. Teams at that position qualifying for the World Cup is rare but we have to win all our games and see what happens."

To-date, many displeased Rwandan soccer fans as they find themselves, have grown accustomed to their team failing to make much of an impression at major tournaments.

The team has often been accused of playing with a lack of creativity and attacking intent, particularly against stronger opposition. The journey has been a rollercoaster.

Critics have blamed both the Ferwafa and Ministry of Sports, citing failure to spend modestly on a good coach who can transform the national team.

In one of the discussion I had with an enthusiast, a carpenter from my neighbourhood, he told me, Spittler should be given time to acquaint himself with the players, team dynamics, so that he can craft a new strategy that leverages the strengths of the players while addressing the defects observed in the past performances.

“To be very honest, we don’t have to put a lot of pressure on this German coach, we shouldn’t forget that he just took the job recently, the team needs a transformation, it’s the dawn of a new era under somebody new, we should all accept that. ” the carpenter said.

With little momentum in qualifying, many fans also believe Spittler has a formidable task, and it is certainly the truth and in all fairness.

Rwanda has never qualified for the senior men World Cup except for the Mexico U17 Global competition.

For once, the men’s side also qualified for the Africa Cup of Nations in 2004 edition where they lost their opening match 2-1 to hosts Tunisia.