By Jejje Muhinde;

The twelve-team Basketball Africa League which is currently underway in Kigali at the magnificent Kigali Arena, in the Rwandan capital, has a diverse 12-man coaching list from all various continents.

From African, Europe to South American, the BAL's coaching list has it all. Some of these head coaches are popular in the African basketball scene, others have started to make their names known in recent times.

Cameroonian Adie Ngono has won the Africa Champions Cup in 2015 at the helm of Angolan giants Petro Atletico de Luanda.

Very few coaches in the BAL have deeper knowledge of AS Salé and Petro de Luanda than FAP's head coach Lazare Adie Ngono.

It wasn't really a surprise that FAP pushed AS Salé to the limit in Tuesday's last game even though the Cameroonian team fell short.

The 43-year-old led AS Salé to the third-place of the 2011 FIBA Africa Champions before spending the last eight seasons (2012 to 2020) at Petro de Luanda.

He has coached most of Petro de Luanda's current roster until last September when he and the club parted ways.

Adie Ngono coached the Angolan champions to their last African title in 2015, but taking FAP to new heights is now his utmost priority.

"Those are two champions' calibre teams, and they are going to be very challenging, but we are going to prepare well in order, to at least, make that surprise," he said after his team's 87-84 defeat to AS Salé.

Ahead of facing Petro de Luanda, FAP are wary that they urgently need to improve their level of concentration in critical moments of the game to repeat mistakes that cost them a win in their Group B opener.

"We have to do a better job controlling that anxiety. We have a group of guys who are seeing this type of competition for the very first time. The anxiety took the best of them." Adie Ngono admitted.

Named the MVP at the 2012 FIBA Africa Champions Cup, Carlos Morais has been chasing his first African clubs title since 2006 when he helped Petro to their continental trophy in Lagos, Nigeria.

“We are going to do everything we can to win the game against FAP. It is going to be difficult, but being in this competition itself is motivating enough to keep us focused. We are a team that never gives in,” Morais said, adding: “Every time I step on the court, the aim is to win the game.”

For Petro de Luanda head coach Jose Neto added: “Every game is like a final for us.”

A quick look into the stats and it reveals some similarities between these two teams.

And if the stats are anything to go by, then this could be a balanced and highly intense matchup, which could be decided in small details such as focus.

With one game into the BAL, FAP’s Marcus Thomas Jr. emerges as an all-round guard, who plays aggressively at both ends of the court. Taking on Petro de Luanda’s Carlos Morais will be one of the most intriguing matchups in the BAL.

BAL action returns today with three Day 5 matchups:

20/05/2021:

Group B

Petro de Luanda vs FAP 2:00 PM

AS Police vs. AS Salé 9:00 PM CAT

Group A

Rivers Hoopers vs. US Monastir 5:30 PM CAT