

Rwanda U17 national football team, the Junior Wasps, face a stern test in the upcoming CECAFA qualifiers as they take on Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan in Group A of the 2026 U17 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) regional qualifiers.

The tournament, running from November 15 to December 2 in Ethiopia, will see Rwanda's group matches held at the iconic Abebe Bikila Stadium. With only the top two teams from each group advancing to the semi-finals, every match will be crucial.

The youth side enters the tournament with growing optimism. Coaches are expected to field a mix of experienced campaigners and promising newcomers, hoping to harness homegrown talent to secure one of CECAFA's two slots at next year's U17 AFCON.

Group A also features regional heavyweights Kenya and Ethiopia, alongside Somalia and South Sudan, setting the stage for competitive clashes. Analysts suggest that Rwanda's chances will depend on defensive solidity and clinical finishing, as the team looks to make a strong statement on the regional stage.

The defending champions Uganda also known as the "Cubs".are placed in Group B.

They won the final of the 2024 CECAFA U-17 AFCON Qualifiers by defeating Tanzania national team 2-1 at Hamz Stadium, Nakivubo, Kampala.

Group A: Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Rwanda

Group B: Uganda, Tanzania, Djibouti, Sudan, Burundi