

Kenya started their journey at the TotalEnergies CAF African Nations Championship (CHAN) PAMOJA 2024 with a huge win, beating two-time champions DR Congo 1-0 on Sunday at the packed Moi International Sports Centre in Nairobi.

This was Kenya's first-ever match in the CHAN finals, and it couldn't have started better. A first-half goal by Austin Odhiambo gave the home team all three points in a tough Group A opener watched by 60,000 excited fans.

CHAN is a tournament held every two years for players who play in their local leagues. It's a chance for homegrown talent to shine — and Kenya's rising stars took that chance.

The match began with pressure from DR Congo, who thought they had scored in the 5th minute. Jephthé Kitambala's goal was ruled out for offside after a VAR review. That decision gave Kenya a boost as they slowly grew in confidence.

Then, just before halftime, the moment of magic came. In the 45+2 minute, Odhiambo received a perfect pass from David Sakwa and calmly placed a left-footed shot into the bottom corner past the Congolese goalkeeper, Brudel Efonge. The stadium erupted.

In the second half, DR Congo tried everything to get back into the game. They pushed forward with attacks and set-pieces, but Kenya's defence stayed strong.

Goalkeeper Byrne Omondi made an important save in the 59th minute, stopping a powerful shot from Heltone Kayembe. Defenders Sylvester Owino and Alphonse Omija also played key roles, clearing dangerous corners and blocking shots.

Coach Benni McCarthy made smart changes in the final minutes, bringing on Mike Kibwage and Marvin Nabwire to help protect the lead.

Despite seven minutes of added time, Kenya held on. It was a historic win — Kenya became only the third debuting team to win their first match in CHAN 2024.

In other CHAN 2024 matches played on Sunday: Morocco came from behind to beat Angola in a tightly contested match. After conceding early, the Atlas Lions equalized through a penalty and found the winner in the second half with a well-placed header from Yassine El Mahdi.

Zambia and Libya played out a goalless draw in a match full of missed chances.

Both sides had opportunities to grab all three points, but strong goalkeeping and wasteful finishing meant they had to settle for a point each.

What's Next?

DR Congo, who haven't won in five CHAN matches, will have to improve quickly. They next face Morocco, while Kenya will take on Angola in their second Group A match on Thursday.

This win not only gave Kenya three points, but it also gave their fans hope that something special might be possible on home