Rayon Sports were left frustrated after conceding a late equaliser in a 2-2 draw with Sudanese side Al Merrikh SC on Wednesday evening at Kigali Pele Stadium.

The home side came into the match with renewed energy, boosted by the return of striker Fall Ngagne, who made his first appearance in 11 months following a long spell on the sidelines. Rayon started on the front foot, clearly intent on making an early statement.

They nearly undid that good work inside five minutes when a defensive mix-up between Chris Rushema and goalkeeper Yves Mugisha handed Daouda Ba a clear opening, but the Al Merrikh forward dragged his effort wide.

Rayon did not have to wait long to take control. In the ninth minute, Aziz Dao drove forward confidently before sending a low ball into the box. Ngagne cleverly let it run, and Tambwe Gloire reacted quickest to slot home from close range.

Al Merrikh gradually settled and began to threaten, with Aboubacar Bachir forcing Mugisha into a smart save from a well-struck free-kick as the visitors searched for a way back.

Just before the break, Rayon doubled their lead. Tambwe Gloire was again at the heart of it, weaving past defenders before laying the ball into the path of Faustin Likau Litombo, who finished calmly making it 2-0 in the 35th minute.

The Sudanese regrouped at half-time, bringing on Faisal Ishag, and the change had an immediate impact. Four minutes after the restart, Aboubacar Bachir Bangoura pulled one back to swing the momentum in Al Merrikh’s favour.

Under increasing pressure, Rayon replaced Ngagne on the hour mark as Al Merrikh continued to push forward with intent.

That pressure finally told late on. With two minutes remaining, Moise Camara found space outside the area and unleashed a powerful strike that beat Mugisha, snatching a deserved equaliser and quietening the home crowd.

The draw leaves Rayon Sports ninth in the Rwanda Premier League with 21 points, while Al Merrikh SC remains fourth on 32.

There was visible disappointment among Rayon supporters at full-time, with hopes of a sustained title push still alive but increasingly tested. Club officials, however,

remain confident.

Speaking earlier on media, interim president Murenzi Abdallah urged patience, insisting the team is still firmly in the hunt for both the league title and the Peace Cup.

“We know the fans want results, and we share that ambition,” he said. “But this is a journey. We will fight until the very end, and the trophies are still within reach.”