

Rwanda's APR BBC entered the 2024 Basketball Africa League (BAL) season with a swagger. Whispers of a staggering \$4 million budget (roughly Rwf 5 billion) confirmed by an anonymous source, promised a dominant run.

However, that ended with a thud – a disheartening defeat in the Sahara Conference playoffs over the weekend. This begs the question: what went wrong for a team seemingly awash in cash?

No one knows for sure how much APR BBC spent, but inside sources confirm over RWF 5 billion, a whopping \$4 million! It's all about fancy training camps in Qatar, big salaries for players, and expensive travel. It seemed like they were going to win for sure, but that didn't translate to the on-court magic.

In Dakar, the military BBC, closed their Sahara Conference with a 2-4 mark. They beat AS Douanes and US Monastir. They lost to Nigeria's Rivers Hoopers and failed to win their last match against AS Douanes, losing 79-54.

Coach Mazen Trakh and his team saw two of their pivotal players Adonis Filer and Obadiah Noel, miss their two decisive games due to injury,

"We were defeated in a tough game that was crucial for our participation in the BAL, partly due to injuries sustained by key players Adonis Filer and Obadia Noel." Mazen admitted.

Noel may have been side-lined for the last two games of the conference with a hamstring injury but his buzzer beater three-pointer saw APR upset US Monastir 89-84 in overtime, undeniably a moment to remember.

Radio sports presenter Mugabo Annet says, "APR BBC spent months in lavish preparation, yet their performance was disappointing. They couldn't even reach the playoffs in Kigali."

"Injuries to key players like Adonis and Noel undoubtedly played a role. However, a deeper issue lurks beneath the surface. The head coach was left with no options, he could not rely on other teams." Mugabo points to a more fundamental flaw: "The team simply lacked the caliber of athletically gifted players needed to compete at this level. They didn't sign better players."

On social media, questions were raised with some fans requesting an investigation to understand how a team with such a hefty budget could crumble so spectacularly.

Other sports analysts have also maintained that this exposed potential shortcomings in the recruitment process, raising questions about the expertise behind player selection. Were the right players targeted? Did internal bias cloud judgment?

Adding fuel to the fire are reports of a lack of “team chemistry.” Was this a coaching misstep? Did inadequate training methods fail to forge a cohesive unit on the court?

The answers remain shrouded in secrecy. Did the coaching staff prioritize individual talent over building a team that could gel under pressure?

Like its football counterpart, APR BBC operates under a veil of secrecy due to its funding by the Rwandan military. Sources have further unveiled that some players pocket over \$15,000 (roughly RWF 19.4million) in salary, not including benefits.

This raises serious questions about the team’s financial priorities. Were resources allocated effectively, or were they used to attract individual talent without considering team synergy?

APR BBC’s silence on these issues is deafening. The long-term effects of this debacle remain to be seen. Will there be a leadership shakeup or a revamped recruitment strategy?

Well, one fact is undeniable. APR BBC’s BAL performance exposes a troubling disconnect between spending and on-court success.