

The tension was palpable, as the top two teams in Group B were yet to be determined, with Uganda, Namibia, and Nigeria all vying for the coveted spots.

Nevertheless, Namibia emerged victorious over Rwanda by 11 runs in a game filled with thrills and heart-stopping moments to secure their spot in the semifinals of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Women's T20 World Cup Africa Qualifier in Uganda.



Merczerly Gorases stepped up and assumed the majority of the responsibility, delivering a defining all-round performance for the Capricorn Eagles in a crucial game they desperately wanted to win to stay on course and avoid elimination from the eight-nation event.

The 18-year-old took charge after Rwanda captain Diane Marie Bimenyimana won the toss and asked Namibia to bat first. Gorases, entering at one down with the scoreboard reading 37 after the dismissal of Yasmeen Khan (15), became the cornerstone around which Namibia's other batters built their innings.

She contributed 21 valuable runs at a steady strike rate of 87, effectively neutralizing the threat posed by medium pacer Belise Murekatete, who claimed three wickets for 18 runs.

By playing Murekatete out of the attack, Gorases indirectly laid the foundation for Jurriene Diergaardt (22) to play with freedom towards the end, helping the Southern Africans set a target of 102 for 7 in their allotted 20 overs.

As Rwanda commenced their tricky chase, the ever-smiling Gorases showcased tidy glovework behind the stumps, demonstrating keen awareness and aiding captain Irene Van Zyl with field settings. In the 16th over, she further showcased her versatility by removing the wicket-keeping pads to bowl some crafty spin, effectively boxing the East Africans out of the contest.

Rwanda were 65 for 3 at that stage and needed 38 runs to win from 36 balls - which was a mission possible - but she squeezed and stifled in equal measure.

Although Rwanda, led by Gisele Ishimwe's 36 runs and Bimenyimana's 12, exerted pressure on Namibia, their dismissals at 74 and 84 respectively left Rwanda's fans in silence, sensing defeat on the horizon.

Gorases, with figures of two for 18 in three overs, left Rwanda stranded on 91 for 8 with no overs left to play, as Namibia joyously celebrated their progression to the semifinals.

Meanwhile, Uganda comfortably strolled to a 6-wicket triumph over Nigeria, solidifying their path to the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Global Qualifier 2024 in Dubai, UAE.

Uganda's captain, Concy Aweko, continued her outstanding form following her sublime match-winning performance against Namibia on Tuesday.



For the third time in a row at these Africa Finals, she won the pre-match toss and also secured her second Player of the Match award as she steered Uganda to victory that ensured they avoid top seeds Zimbabwe in the semifinals.

Aweko exhibited her prowess by claiming three wickets for 16 runs, preventing the Nigeria tail from making an impact as the Female Yellow Greens struggled to set a modest total of 63.

The clean-up job by Aweko followed formidable spells from the towering opening bowler, Evelyn Anyipo (two for 11 in 4 overs), who had the West Africans in deep trouble at 20 for 4 inside six overs. Left-arm slow orthodox bowler Sarah Akiteng, playing her first game of the tournament proved she wasn't a bench player with two scalps for 7 runs in her four overs, including an impressive 20 dot balls.

Despite a resilient effort from Nigeria's captain, Blessing Etim (24 off 42), Uganda's sharp bowling made the total appear paltry. Proscovia Alako (23) and Kevin Awino (16) set the tone with an opening stand of 36, leaving Janet Mbabazi (9*) and Immaculate Nakisuyi (5*) to seal the victory with 30 balls to spare.

Nigeria, despite finding some joy with four wickets in Uganda's innings, concluded the match teary and inconsolable, as their campaign came to an abrupt end on a day that held promising opportunity for them.

Uganda is now set to face Tanzania in the semifinals in an East African derby, while Zimbabwe is poised to clash with Namibia in the other last four fixture - a Southern Africa derby - scheduled for Saturday, December 16th. The semifinals promise more sensational action in Entebbe as another chapter of African Cricket closes...

Namibia v Rwanda

Rwanda won the toss and elected to bowl

Namibia 102 for 7 in 20 overs (J Diergaardt 22, M Gorases 21, S Wittmann 17; B Murekatete three for 18, H.T Ishimwe one for 12)*

Rwanda 91 for 8 in 20 overs (G Ishimwe 36, D.M Bimenyimana 13; N Benjamin two for 13, M Gorases two for 18)

Namibia won by 11 runs

Game 12 - Uganda v Nigeria

Uganda won the toss and elected to bowl

Nigeria 63 for 9 in 20 overs (B Etim 24, S Sunday 10; C.N Aweko three for 16, S Akiteng two for 7, E Anyipo two for 11)

Uganda 66 for 4 in 15 overs (P Alako 23, K Awino 16; A Adekunle two for 13, P Agboya one for 8)

Uganda won by 6 wickets (with 30 balls remaining)

Matchday 7 - Semifinals Fixtures - Saturday, December 16

Game 13: Zimbabwe v Namibia (09:30)

Game 14: Uganda v Tanzania (01:50)

Points Table - Group A

Team	Played	Won	Lost	Tied	No Result	Points	NR
Zimbabwe	3	3	0	0	0	6	+3.524
Tanzania	3	2	1	0	0	4	+0.779
Kenya	3	1	2	0	0	2	-1.491
Botswana	3	0	3	0	0	0	-4.508

Points Table - Group B

Team	Played	Won	Lost	Tied	No Result	Points	NRR
Uganda	3	3	0	0	0	6	+0.960
Namibia	3	2	1	0	0	4	+0.204
Nigeria	3	1	2	0	0	2	-0.687
Rwanda	3	0	3	0	0	0	-0.726