

*By: Jerry Rugamba*

Defending Champions APR FC were forced to settle for a one-all draw against Rutsiro FC on Saturday at Umuganda Stadium, as the army side dropped vital points in their push to climb the Rwanda Premier League table.

Backed by a lively home crowd, Rutsiro started the brighter of the two teams and almost broke the deadlock in the sixth minute when Mumbele Jeremie fired narrowly wide after a neat exchange on the edge of the box.

The hosts continued to threaten from set pieces, but it was APR who struck first. In the 32nd minute, Denis Omedi latched onto a clever pass from Hakim Kiwanuka and slotted home to give the visitors the lead.

Rutsiro's response was immediate. Just nine minutes later, they were awarded a penalty after Niyigena brought down Mumbele Mbusa inside the area. Jean Claude Nizeyimana made no mistake from the spot, sending the goalkeeper the wrong way to level the score at 1-1.

The second half produced chances for both sides, but finishing proved elusive. APR introduced fresh legs in search of a winner, yet Rutsiro's defence held firm to secure a valuable point on home soil.

APR's performance was further affected by the absence of several key players. Midfielder Ronald Ssekiganda missed the match after receiving two yellow cards in the club's goalless draw against Kiyovu Sports.

Striker Memel Dao, who picked up an injury during APR's 1-0 win over Mukura VS, remains sidelined and is expected to be out for at least three more weeks under medical supervision. Forward Djibril Ouattara, injured during the CECAFA Kagame Cup, has also been advised to rest and is expected to return after the international break.

Elsewhere, Mukura VS shared the spoils with Police FC, while Musanze FC eased past Amagaju FC with a 2-0 victory.

After six rounds of matches, Police FC top the league with 16 points, followed by Rayon Sports on 10. APR, who have two games in hand, sit seventh with seven points.