The men’s national handball team got their Africa Handball Championship campaign off to a promising start on Wednesday, beating Zambia 30–19 at BK Arena.

The match came after the tournament’s official opening ceremony, which marked the 27th edition of the competition and brought together 16 nations. The event was attended by the Minister of Sports, Nelly Mukazayire, alongside key figures from the continent’s handball community, including CAHB president Dr Mansourou Aremou and Rwanda Handball Federation president Alfred Twahirwa.

Rwanda was quick out of the blocks, with Kayijamahe Yves and Mbesutunguwe Samuel leading the charge. By the 20th minute, they had built a 12–6 lead, and they kept the pressure on as the first half progressed. By half-time, the hosts were firmly in control, leading 17–8.

In the second half, Rwanda coach Hafedh Zouabi made a few changes, introducing three new players. Zambia took advantage of the fresh legs and started to chip away at the deficit, with Audriscal among those finding the net.

But Rwanda soon reasserted themselves. Around the 20-minute mark of the second half, Kayijamahe Yves and Emmanuel Kubwimana restored the lead, and the team finished strongly to secure a 30–19 win.

Yves was named player of the match after scoring 10 goals.

Rwanda now turn their attention to Algeria, with their next game scheduled for Thursday at 19:00.

Elsewhere in Group A, Nigeria edged out Algeria 25–23.

In Group B, reigning champions Egypt opened their title defence with a 36–25 win over Gabon, while Angola beat Uganda 27–21.

Group C saw Tunisia dominate Cameroon 41–22, and Guinea beat Kenya 36–27.

Group D action ended with Cape Verde defeating Congo Brazzaville 34–28, and Morocco running out comfortable 52–29 winners over Benin.

The top five teams from this tournament will qualify for the 2027 Handball World Championship in Germany.