

Rayon Sports extended their lead at the top of the Rwanda Premier League with a hard-fought 2-0 victory over city rivals Police FC at Kigali Pele Stadium on Saturday, January 4th. Despite being depleted by injuries and suspensions, the league leaders showcased their resilience and quality to overcome a tough opponent and preserve their eight-point advantage.

Playing without suspended center-back Aimable Nsabimana, Rayon Sports suffered an early blow when captain Muhire Kevin was forced off with an injury just 15 minutes into the match. However, the league leaders showed their resilience, maintaining control of the game despite the setback

In the early stages, both teams looked to gain a foothold in the match. Police FC threatened first, as right-back Shami Carnot made an overlapping run down the right flank in the 5th minute and delivered a cross that found Chukwuma Odili, but there was no teammate on hand to finish the chance.

Rayon Sports responded with a swift counter-attack in the 11th minute. Adama Bagayogo burst down the right and picked out the run of Fall Ngagne, whose powerful shot was palmed away by goalkeeper Patience Niyongira. The rebound fell invitingly, but Niyongira was quick to smother the danger.

Muhire went down injured in the 14th minute following a collision with David Chemezie. He spent close to five minutes outside the field before returning. But he had to be replaced by Hadji Iraguha after the midfielder looked too hurt to continue to game.

The Senegalese striker turned from goal scorer to assist provider as he set up centre back Youssou Diagne connected beautifully from his cross to give Rayon the lead in the 44th minute. The goal sent the home crowd into a frenzy mood as they began to intensify their chanting.

The first half ended with Rayon leading 1-0.

Police FC coach Vincent Mashami brought on Didier Mugisha for Muhadjiri Hakizimana who had an evening to forget with little contribution to the game in the first half while Simeon Iradukunda was also introduced for skipper Eric Nsabimana.

Police FC players looked lethargic with the exception of Abedi Bigirimana and Christian Ishimwe who could move the ball into the Rayon half.

A failed clearance from Yakubu saw the ball hitting Ngagne. The attacker then squared the ball to the right as Bagayogo easily beat his marker before delivering a cross which Shami Carnot bundled into his own net to make it 2-0 for Rayon in the 64th minute.

Rayon coach Robertinho Oliveira brought on Aziz Bassane for Bagayogo in the 70th minute as he sought a new dimension on the right wing.

Striker Elijah Ani missed another glorious chance that could have seen the law enforcers halve the deficit for Police in the 80th minute, following sloppy defending by the Rayon centre backs.

David Chemezie was sent off in the 89th minute following a second bookable offense. He tripped Bassane as the Cameroonian forward was heading towards the goal. The resultant free kick was wasted by Abdul Rahman Rukundo.

Rayon held on as they won 2-0, capping off an unbeaten first round campaign. The win saw them retain their eight-point lead at the top.

APR FC are second with 28 points although they have played one game less.