

Somali referee Omar Abdulkadir Artan has been appointed to officiate the final of the 2026 CECAFA Kagame Cup, scheduled at Amahoro Stadium on August 7.

The appointment was confirmed by the Council for East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA) on Sunday in Kigali.

Artan will be assisted by Kenya's Stephen Yiembe and Djibouti's Liban Abdulrazack, with the same officiating team also set to oversee the UEFA Super Cup later this month between UEFA Champions League winners Paris Saint-Germain and UEFA Europa League champions Aston Villa in Salzburg, Austria.

CECAFA President Paulos Weldehaimanot Andemariam welcomed Artan's return to the regional competition, describing him as one of Africa's leading referees.

"On behalf of CECAFA, I warmly welcome Artan back to our region as he officiates at the CECAFA Kagame Cup 2026," Andemariam said in a statement.

"His presence at our flagship competition highlights the high standards that CECAFA is committed to promoting, and we are proud that one of our own continues to represent Africa with distinction on the world stage."

Artan's appointment comes just weeks after he attracted widespread attention following reports that he missed out on officiating at the 2026 FIFA World Cup despite being among Africa's top-ranked referees. The Somali official was named CAF Men's Referee of the Year in 2025 and has since continued to receive major international assignments.

Artan was selected to officiate at the 2026 FIFA World Cup but was unable to do so after being denied entry into the United States, despite holding a valid visa. He later received another major appointment when UEFA named him among the officials for the 2026 UEFA Super Cup.

According to CECAFA, the three match officials are expected to arrive in Kigali on Tuesday, ahead of the tournament's semifinal matches.

The race for this year's Kagame Cup title has narrowed to four teams. Rwanda's Rayon Sports will face South Sudan's Jamus FC in one semifinal, while Kenya's Gor Mahia meet Sudanese giants Al Hilal in the other.

The winners will advance to Friday's final at Amahoro Stadium.

The champions of this year's CECAFA Kagame Cup will receive US\$30,000 (estimated Rwf 44million), while the runners-up will earn US\$20,000 (around Rwf 29.3m). The third-placed team will take home US\$10,000(est Rwf 15m).

Tanzania's Singida Black Stars FC defeated AL Hilal of Sudan by 2-1 to lift the title in Dar es Salaam last year.