

*By Jeje Muhinde;*

Last week, Ugandan Mike Hillary Mutebi was appointed as AS Kigali football head coach for the next two seasons.

The Ugandan born coach signed a two year-deal, and is assisted by his compatriot Jackson Mayanja.

Speaking about the appointment, Mutebi was typically extroverted in his response, when he admitted that the club has a good project, it gives him a good offer adding that the objectives were decent enough.

Without any doubt, the former KCCA head coach is one of the best decorated managers not just at home but in the region.

He won four Uganda Premier League titles, the Uganda Cup twice plus the CECAFA Kagame Cup in 2020.

Since he was appointed the KCCA coach in mid-2015, Mutebi went on to oversee a record total of 247 games where he won 152 matches, drew on 56 occasions and lost 39 games.

Well, the question remains what does Mutebi-Mayanja coaching combo in AS Kigali mean?

To begin with, the pair brings a whole range of football experience to AS Kigali and Rwandan football.

Don't forget both coaches played together at KCCA, Mutebi played as a defender while the Mayanja was a striker who went on to become a Pro with, El Masry (Egypt), Esperance (Tunisia) and Lowi FC (Oman) before turning to coaching in 2002.

They're almost in the same age bracket; the only difference is that Mutebi started his coaching career earlier than Mayanja back in 1997.

"About Jackson Mayanja, I played with him, I coached him, and we have enough knowledge about Rwandan, and sub Saharan Africa football. It is very good," Mutebi mentioned.

When it comes to philosophy, Mutebi is a great admirer of Dutch and Spanish football. His ideal style is to play possessive, passing, attacking football where everyone is involved from the goalkeeper to the striker.

He prefers everyone on his side to touch the ball, and play very attractive football that is good to watch.

When asked if the AS Kigali players can adapt to his system, he replied was like a teacher inspiring people to be better;

“I think the boys are going to enjoy it better. They’re willing to learn, they’re very eager, which means it will be good for us to implement our philosophy,” He pointed out.

Adding, “We must perfect our acts (philosophy), I don’t coach to react to others, I must perfect my own, and it is the others who react. That means I can’t get worried about others,”

What the coach was trying to suggest is that, even though APR remained unbeaten run this season, he’s not bothered instead to focus on his own philosophy.

“It is not about an unbeaten run, we are going to focus on our own; we cannot worry about APR FC. Yes it is a big team, very successful. AS Kigali wants to be number, we want to break that dominance and to do that, and we must do something to change our football” He noted.

As a foreign coach, joining AS Kigali is a perfect opportunity to adventure in the Rwandan league to export his style of football.

Truth be told, his success can on the other hand, hand him an opportunity to be a candidate for troubled national teams like Amavubi.

What is going to make his success or failure depends on, first to delve into the January transfer market to recruit three new players who fit in his system.

Already, sources have revealed he is targeting Vipers SC midfielder Jamil Kalisa as his first signing.

Coming from a background of youth football, his philosophy is centered on youth development and player education since his days at Miracle FC and SC Villa.

At KCCA, he established himself and carved a niche for attracting players from school competition and sharpening their skill and turning them to domestic and continental icons.

Don't get surprised to see some of the players like Haruna Niyonzima and others thrown out of the equation.

Another flash in the plan will hinge on his relationship with his bosses. As a man of values, he prefers a relationship with my bosses to always be about respect of duties and person but not to overstep boundaries and try to influence his technical decisions.

Thirdly, will management accept the usual Mutebi that we all know?

The other issue to note is that, Mutebi's relationship with his assistant, former teammate Jackson Mayanja will be put to test.

The former Kasasiro technician is well known for his ego of being in charge of training sessions; he enjoys setting the system and format of play for his boys.

Finally, the move for Mike and Mayanja to AS Kigali should set a precedent for local Rwandan coaches, not to refrain themselves only at home but beyond as ambassadors.