

Sports



Arrogance wins

Upset The playoffs delivered one of the season's biggest shocks as Makerere Impis overturned Kobs to book a place in the semifinals. **P38**



Soaring. South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns celebrate winning their second African Champions League title as a 1-1 draw away against AS FAR proved enough to clinch a 2-1 aggregate victory in the final at the vast and hostile 70,000-seat Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium. PHOTOS/COURTESY

Two-star Onyango

Built to last. A decade after leading Mamelodi Sundowns to their first Caf Champions League crown, Denis Onyango returned to the summit of African club football in Rabat - older, less central on the pitch, but still impossible to ignore.

BY ANDREW MWANGUHYA

ONYANGO ACCOLADES

- 12x Premier Soccer League winner
- 2x Caf Champions League
- 1x African Football League
- 1x Caf Super Cup
- 3x Telkom Cups
- 2x Nedbank Cups
- 1x MTN 8 Cup
- 1x African-based Player of the Year

There was something fitting about Denis Onyango's second Caf Champions League title arriving in disorder.

A red card from the bench. Bottles flying from the stands. Tempers stretched thin by tension, noise and history.

Then, at the end of it all, another gold medal around the neck of a goalkeeper who has spent nearly two decades building one of the greatest African careers of his generation. Football rarely offers symmetry. Yet Rabat somehow did. Ten years after Onyango stood at the centre of Mamelodi Sundowns' first continental coronation under Pitsso Mosimane, he was there again on Sunday

as the South African giants drew 1-1 with AS FAR Rabat to seal a 2-1 aggregate victory and reclaim the biggest prize in African club football.

Change of roles

Only this time, the role had changed. Back in 2016, Onyango was the towering figure in goal, leader and heartbeat of a team discovering itself at the high-stakes continental level.

In 2026, he arrived at the final as veteran custodian, elder statesman and increasingly part-time footballer.

The legs no longer carry the same authority. Time sees to that eventually. But influence does not always disappear with minutes played. Sometimes it deepens. "Waking

up as an African champion again feels sweeter after a huge win like that last night," Onyango said afterwards.

Then came the line that revealed what it meant to him. "After 10yrs, the Caf Champions League title returns home - back where it belongs." It was less boast than belonging. Sundowns have spent the last decade trying to convince the continent that they are Africa's modern standard bearers. Expensive, ambitious, relentless.

But for all their domestic dominance, the Champions League has become an uncomfortable reminder of unfinished

business. Until Rabat. The night itself was brutal. Hostile. Moroccan fans tend to breathe with fury and this one did not disappoint. Far Rabat led through Mohamed Hrimat's penalty after 40 minutes and the stadium briefly tilted towards belief.

But Sundowns replied almost immediately through Teboho Mokoenana's superb finish, a goal that quietened the noise and shifted the pressure back into Moroccan lungs.

Chaos

During the celebrations, Onyango became part of the chaos. Objects were allegedly thrown towards the Sundowns bench and the Ugandan goalkeeper reacted by hurling a water bottle back towards the stands. The referee spotted it. Red card. Dismissed without playing a minute. "The final is an emotional game," Onyango admitted later. "I shouldn't have done that with the experience I have, but that is football."



Ugandan legend Denis Onyango (L) is a multiple winner.

SPORTS SUMMARY



TT: Focus turns to Accra event

SBy now we would have known whether the Ugandan female team had defended their gold medal at the ITTF-Africa East Regional Championships in Port Sudan, but... **P37**

ATHLETICS

Sizzling Chemutai edges to word record

Peruth Chemutai peeled away from her familiar competitors in Olympic champion Winfred Yavi Mutile and world champion Faith Cherotich. **P38**



CONF. LEAGUE

Palace boss: From 'Glasner Out' to glory?

It felt like the bitter end of a beautiful love affair three months ago when Crystal Palace fans in the away end for their side's UEFA Conference League playoff against HSK Zrinjski Mostar directed their anger at manager Oliver Glasner. Few would have bet on Glasner seeing through his contract.

