Eligibility concerns throw NVL finals into turmoil

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NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE
Game One results
KCCA 3-0 VVC
KCCA lead series 1-0

KAMPALA. With just hours left until the start of the National Volleyball League finals, news started spreading that a petition from Elyon could change the composition of the finalists.

Saturday night was supposed to be Game One but the federation communicated in at 5pm that a petition from Elyon had been upheld and Nemostars lost their place in the finals.

The women's finals went on as scheduled and KCCA defeated Vision Volleyball Camp (VVC) in straight sets to put one hand on the title.

But the men's finals will have to wait.

Elyon lost the semifinal series 2-1 but filed a petition to the federation about the eligibility of middle blocker Salva Marial and receiver-attacker Federicko Mujinya.

Marial, who was part of the OBB team that won the league in 2022, is a South Sudanese national who requires an International Transfer Certificate (ITC) to play in Uganda.

Game Interrupted. On-court action has taken a backseat between Elyon and Nemo as off-court disputes dominate headlines PHOTO/J. BATANUDDE

He missed the first two games of the semifinals but turned up for the decider. "Mr. Marial is registered as a South Sudanese national for the current season but lacks a valid ITC in the VIS system. His last recorded ITC was for the 2021/2022 season with OBB VC" the three-man committee set up to hear the cases, revealed. Nemostars insist that Marial is a student and qualifies to be exempted from the ITC.

But the committee, chaired by Innocent Komakech, revealed that Marial is beyond the age eligible for university scholarship.

"Although the defense claims the player is a student at Nkumba University, UVF By-law Section 5(d) requires foreign student players to be on bursary to participate. UVF registration data indicates the player's age exceeds the limit for Nkumba University scholarships; therefore, he does not qualify for this exemption."

Mujinya, meanwhile, is said to have featured for Bishop Stuart University in the 2024/2025 season.

His name, according to the committee, was not listed on the initial first-team player form submitted by Nemostars. "While his name appears on an updated registration form shared mid-season, official federation records indicate he played for BSU during the 2024/2025 season, and started playing for NEMO on the second leg of 2025/2026 and does not appear on the official list of transferred players for the 2025/2026 season."

These committee's findings pointed to various violations, including failure to obtain clearance from a former club and lack of official transfer registration, participation without the required registration fee payment and failure to adhere to the single-club membership requirement.

Nemostars maintain that they signed Mujinya as a free agent whose official records show that he last played for Mitooma Police in the Western Volleyball League during the 2023/2024 season. In a statement released, the club rejected what they termed as a baseless petition by Elyon.

"Nemostars Volleyball Club officially and categorically rejects a baseless petition filed by Elyon VC regarding the alleged use of "illegal" or ineligible players during the 2026 National Volleyball League (NVL) playoffs," read ,the statement in part.

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