

FRENCH CLUB LE HAVRE SIGN UGANDAN FEMALE STAR

NANKYA STRIKES MOVE TO FRANCE

COURTESY

By Chrispus Baluku

Shadia Nankya has taken a ground-breaking step for Ugandan women's football by joining Le Havre AC Féminines in France's Women's Première Ligue, becoming the first Ugandan to feature in the country's top division. The 24-year-old centre-back signed a one-and-a-half-year contract with the French side, moving from Dallas Trinity FC in the United States, a transition that marks both a personal milestone and achievement for women's football in Uganda.

"This move matches my ambitions to compete, grow, and succeed at the highest level. It is a reflection of my progress and also shows that Ugandan women's football is gaining respect and recognition on the global stage," Nankya said.

Le Havre AC confirmed the signing on Tuesday through their official social media platforms, praising Nankya's composure, defensive intelligence, and versatility on the field. For Nankya, the transfer is a proud moment not just personally, but for the country and for every aspiring female footballer in Uganda.

"Being the first Ugandan to play in the French top league is a huge honour for me and for Uganda. I hope this achievement inspires young girls back home to believe in themselves and pursue their dreams, no matter the obstacles," she added.

The move sees Nankya join one of Europe's most competitive and technically demanding women's football environments, known for nurturing talent and promoting progressive, attacking football. She brings with her extensive international experience gained from stints in the United States and Egypt. Last year, she played for Washington Spirit and was loaned to Dallas Trinity FC, where she consistently showcased her defensive strength and leadership. Prior to that, she played for FC Masar in Egypt, helping the club finish third in their debut CAF Women's Champions League campaign and earning a spot in the tournament's team of the competition alongside fellow Ugandan Aisha Nantongo.

Nankya's football journey began humbly in 2016 at Uganda Martyrs Lubaga Women FC, where she immediately made her mark. Despite playing as a defender, she finished as top scorer in the FUFA Women's Cup with nine goals in her final season. She later joined UCU Lady Cardinals, further honing her skills before making the leap abroad. In 2018, she broke into the Crested Cranes national team, contributing to CECAFA and COSAFA bronze medal victories and solidifying her reputation as one of Uganda's most talented female footballers.

Her journey has not been without challenges. In 2021, a knee injury ruled her out of the 2022 CECAFA Women's Championship and the 2022 Women's Africa Cup of Nations, but Nankya made a full recovery and returned stronger, ready to embrace bigger challenges.

By joining Le Havre AC Féminines, Nankya not only achieves a personal dream but also blazes a trail for other Ugandan women footballers aspiring to compete on the European stage. Her move signals that talent from Uganda can succeed in highly competitive international environments and highlights the growing recognition of Ugandan women's football worldwide.



Nankya

