

African coaches prove their worth in Chan

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KIGALI. Debate over whether African coaches should be considered more when it comes to managing national teams will not go away. It has come up at every Nations Cup, where foreign managers – mostly European – have won the title 16 times against African coaches' 14.

But over the years, at least in Chan – Afcon's younger sister –, locally-bred coaches have shown that when given chance, they can do just as their European counterparts.

This year's Chan edition in Rwanda is the latest sound example. Of the 16 coaches, only three in-

cluding Uganda's Micho Sredojevic (Serbia), Ivory Coast's Michel Dussuyer (France) and Rwanda's Johnny McKinstry (Northern Ireland) are not Africans.

That is one more locally-bred coach than in 2014 in South Africa, where there were four foreign managers. Actually, two African coaches have won two of the first three editions of Chan, with Mutumbile Santos leading his native DRC to the inaugural title in 2009 and Tunisian Sami Trabelsi orchestrating his country's 2011 success.

Spanish Javier Clemente remains the only European to lead an African side to Chan glory after his feat with Libya in 2014. This year, three of

the semifinalists including Guinea coach Mohamed Bangoura, DRC's Florent Ibenge and Djibril Drame of Mali are Africans. Cote d'Ivoire's Michel Dussuyer, a Frenchman, is the other semifinalist.

DRC's Ibenge is amazed by the new direction but proud of it. "It's a new tendency," the modest Ibenge exclusively told *Daily Monitor*.

"Before, we were few coaches from Africa, in this tournament (semifinals) we are three, and only Cote d'Ivoire, Michel Dusseyer is from Europe. I'm proud of that because for the first time our bosses let us work." But must African coaches be given the job simply because they are African? "No," said

Ibenge, "It's a just a question of competence. Before, they wouldn't let us work but now we have shown that if they let us work we can bring some results." Guinea coach, Bangoura, is the other African semifinalist. "If you have confidence of the people, you can do the best," he said. "But the psychology of most people in Africa is they like a foreigner to coach a national team."

CHAN WINNING COACHES

2014: Javier Clemente, European (Spanish), led Libya to title

2011: Sami Trabelsi, African (Tunisian), led Tunisia to title

2009: Mutumbile Santos, African (Congolese), led DRC to title.