

TIME TO LIFT THE TROPHY, BLACK STARS BY
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Ghana as a country is divergent on major issues particularly politics but the nation is always a united front when it comes to sports, especially football. A Ghanaian's love for football and support for the national team Black stars is immeasurable. The only time you'll see a Ghanaian skip church service, crucial job meetings and other engagements is when our beloved Black Stars are playing. The typical Ghanaian's love for the national team cannot be explained by mere words.

Although the country's senior national football team has failed to deliver any major honour in terms of trophy since they last won the African Cup of Nations (AFCONS) in 1982, faithful Ghanaians still gather and rally profound support for the team when playing with the hope that our time to win another AFCONS trophy will come and we shall smile again.

In recent years there have been some great despair and regrettable moments that supporting the Black Stars has brought to Ghanaians. Some of the great moments were when we went to the World Cup for the first time in the country's history in 2006. The footballing world got a glimpse of what stuff we are made of. The team dazzled every football loving individual in the world with our performance by beating Czech Republic in our group who were ranked 2nd in football rankings and drew with Serbia, another tough opposition who were already exposed to life in the World Cup. Even as a novice, we managed to qualify from our group termed the group of death with the almighty Italy part of that group. Fast forward to the disappointment which dampened the morale of the football loving Ghanaian. That was the infamous or scandalous world cup



money lifting saga and the dressing room roar in Brazil 2014, as captured by the World Cup Commission's Report. I believe this is a well-known story that I don't intend to revisit to bring back pain to the heart of the tax payer. Even after that Brazil incident Ghanaians forgave their beloved stars and rallied behind them in the following year's Nations cup 2015. Now Ghanaians are beginning to forget about the past and forge in unity for the Black Stars.

There is an ongoing AFCON tournament this year 2017, and happy to relate, there is total peace at camp. We have managed to proceed to the semifinal stage. I must confess that the usual and enthusiastic support that the football loving Ghanaian has for their national team whenever they played is almost lost but not totally lost. The Ghanaian football fan expressed his happiness with the performance of the Stars by decorating their homes and vehicles with the National Flag, jerseys of individual players were sold and worn by many. People gathered in groups to discuss and watched Black Star games over drinks. Those scenes have not saturated the atmosphere this time around. It will be convenient to watch it just for the love of the game and their national side. This significant loss of interest in the Black Stars is attributed to many varied reasons; the public wrangling between the Ghana Football Association (GFA) and the Government's ministry in-charge of that sector, is one of the reasons. Egos of some individuals eclipsed the core business of promoting and developing the national team all relating to money. This avoidable clash has terribly caused us from booking our place in the next edition of the IFA world which will take place in Russia, 2018, as we are now left on a thin line to squeeze water out of a rock. The persistent acrimony over bonuses to the players and management as well as other staff is another matter that must be analyzed and brought to a closure to avoid future recurrence. The process of scouting for a coach and the determination of his emoluments must be much more transparent to engender trust.



These hiccups notwithstanding, the Stars are shining in Gabon 2017 African Cup and pleads for the nation's backing. I think it is time we buried all hatchets and rallied strongly behind them for them to bring glory back to the nation, because there is a local adage that, if your kid eases his/herself on your lap you don't amputate that lap. So I say Go Black Stars Go and make our Nation proud and great again. Long live Black Stars! Long live Ghana.