

E2MyNetWork

Daughter of ex-footballer shining on the pitch and in class **P.6**

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HOW SPORT IS CHANGING YOUTHS' LIFE GOALS



In Nakuru, young Kenyans are embracing sport to kick out crime and ethnic strife **P.4&5**

When a customer dumps you

BY PAUL KARIUKI

The other day, the internet was ablaze as many, especially bloggers, took to social media to cast aspersions on a certain thriving entrepreneur who made a rude comment as a reply to another entrepreneur who had asked him to buy items from her. By the time the thriving entrepreneur was making apologies and amends, it seemed the damage had already been done to his business reputation, and maybe putting his social media brand ambassadors at an awkward position. That could have been an isolated case but it still offers vital business lessons as to why your valuable customer may leave. Here are a few pointers.

Your attitude

Because you're a big name in that specific business segment, you may choose to treat some of your customers in a bad way. Some may be dirt-poor and would ask to enter in a staggered payment programme for goods and services they procure from you. Their missing on a given timeframe may be informed by factors beyond their control, but your ego is something else. You repossess whatever goods you gave, and you don't compensate the little they have already paid, claiming they forfeited any rights for reimbursement, and profits on their miseries. And because your name is synonymous with your business, you arrogantly tell them to take the case wherever they can, as you know right hands to grease to protect any damage to your reputation.

Your employees

A customer may strike a kind of rapport with that regular employee. This rapport doesn't go beyond the business, but other employees become envious of that employee. They don't understand the relationship between that employee and customer. Soon, gossip mills are on an overdrive, and the rumours get traction. It injures both the customer and employee. In a short time, the employee ceases being that loyal customer. You see that customer beating a path to your competition right next to your door or down the same street. Remember some people have fragile emotions and it takes a long time to heal. By this time, you're left with questions whether it's you, the quality of goods or services that made that customer bolt out.

When trust is lost

There are businesses that operate solely on trust. Sample the case of a businessman in Brazil who was procuring goods from China. This businessman was a frequent visitor to a Chinese goods manufacturer. It came to a point where the businessman and manufacturer established trust. Now the manufacturer increased production capacity and entered into an agreement with the businessman where the latter was to take stock on credit and repay a certain percentage once the stock was sold. The manufacturer would ship goods to the nearest port at own cost. Sample this with where a locally established manufacturer had established trust with such a businessman, and the latter gets a big contract to supply goods and runs to manufacturer brandishing invoice and contract agreements but the former demands three-quarters of down payments. The businessman has nothing to that tune, and the deal falls out flat. From that misgiving that develops, you won't see that customer again.

Other customers

There are customers who may hate your usual customer, who may be known as a generous soul to a fault. Behind that customer's back, you may hear strange narratives if not gossip advanced. You hear the customer is surveying your business and transmitting info to authorities, no wonder surprise raids are conducted at your premises to ascertain authenticity of your stock-in-trade. Your premises are broken into and you hear your loyal customer is one who provided intel on the same to thugs without even authenticating anything. Poor customers can end in gallows on false accusations!

Competition

A new market entrant sees how you conduct your business and brands itself in your style, except here branding is different but goods and services on offer are the same. The difference is the price. The new entrant offers lower and discounted prices, including credit services for repeat bulk purchasers of goods and services. Slowly, your market niche gets eaten away. By the time you're trying to outdo that competition, it may be late. You don't know the enticements offered to lock your customers to the competing business.

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Moraa is an award-winning sales manager in a solar products firm

Ms Linet Moraa, the sales manager in charge of channel business (that is distribution of solar products) at Hexing Africa. The company is a subsidiary of a Chinese manufacturer dealing in energy products that include solar products and smart energy meters. PHOTO | POOL



Media

Meet Moraa, the solar girl

BY MAGDALENE WANJA

While experimenting on different roles and positions a person can play, Linet Moraa found herself in diverse fields, among them communications, events, law, engineering and the medical sector.

This was after graduating with a business administration degree from Kenyatta University in 2015.

One thing in her that stood out was her adaptability. She found it very easy to fit into whatever life threw her way and her friends and acquaintances took note of that.

"A friend introduced me to a friend of theirs that had a solar product sales and system implementation company. I started out as an executive assistant and front desk customer service attendant. My assistant skills were not very sharp and that didn't go very well; but my customer service was termed as stellar," she says.

Moraa quickly learnt the products and the sales processes. This saw her win the salesperson of the year award in 2020, before graduating to sales coordinator and then distribution manager.

Technologies keep improving. There is a lot of change every so often; so keeping up is tasking at times.

Linet Moraa



Then she left to join her current employer, Hexing Technology Company Ltd (Hexing Africa).

"As they say, the rest is history," she adds.

At Hexing, she is a sales manager in charge of channel business, which is distribution of solar products.

Her job revolves around client relationship management, which entails building and maintaining strong relationships with clients, including distributors, retailers, and end-users, to

understand their needs and provide tailored solutions.

She also deals with strategy development. This is about developing and implementing strategic sales plans to achieve sales targets and maximise revenue in the distribution sector. It may involve analysing market trends, identifying new business opportunities, and refining sales techniques.

"I also do team leadership and management, where I lead a team of sales professionals, providing guidance, support and motivation to ensure they meet their targets and deliver exceptional customer service," she adds.

Other roles include product knowledge and training, market research and analysis, order management and logistics, customer support and after-sales service, and performance tracking and reporting.

Moraa notes that her greatest turning point of her career came when she recognised the transformative potential of forging strategic partnerships within the solar energy ecosystem.

"Early in my career, I realised that to truly drive sales and expand market reach in the distribution sector, it was essential to establish collaborative relationships with key stakeholders, including my supervisors, distributors, retailers, service providers and end-users," she notes.

This, she says, not only shaped her career trajectory but also reinforced her belief in the power of collaboration and strategic thinking to drive meaningful change in the solar industry.

"It is a constant reminder of the importance of seizing opportunities, embracing challenges, and continuously striving for excellence in everything I do," she says.

She has also bagged awards due to her goal-oriented policy.

"After joining Hexing, I was recognised company-wide as the Sales Star of 2023," she says.

"Solar Quarter Africa also recognised me as the distribution sector visionary, giving me the Grandmaster Award for 2024. My team won Sales Team of the Year 2024 and Company of the Year (Distribution)," she adds.

She says the feeling of making changes and seeing her new ideas adopted by her seniors – which leads to target achievements – is fulfilling.

The biggest challenge with her job in the solar industry is feeling like one is not evolving as fast as the industry is.

"Technologies keep improving. There is a lot of change every so often. So, keeping up is tasking at times.

You also can never quite say that now I have mastered my art... every day is an opportunity to learn something else," she adds.

She says her goal is to make a lasting difference in the transition towards a more sustainable and environmentally conscious future.

"Whether it's through driving sales growth, advocating for renewable energy policies or nurturing the next generation of industry leaders, I'm committed to leveraging my skills and experience to create positive change and leave a meaningful legacy within the solar industry and beyond," she concludes.

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BREATHE 2024

Where: Amazon

Video

Genre: Action,
Thriller

BY MICHAEL OCHIENG

Breathe is a 2024 American science fiction action thriller film directed

by Stefon Bristol, written by Doug Simon, and starring Jennifer Hudson, Milla Jovovich, Quvenzhané Wallis, Common, and Sam Worthington. The film is set in a world where oxygen levels on Earth have dropped, making it impossible to live on the planet's surface without specialised equipment

In the near future, where oxygen is scarce and Earth's surface is uninhabitable, *Breathe* takes us on a harrowing journey. After a tipping point catastrophe, Earth is void of plants and global oxygen levels have dropped to five per cent. Instead of communicating properly

and working together, the survivors create artificial conflict and fight for an "oxygen generator", killing each other and destroying the machine. The survivors move on to the next place with an oxygen generator.

Maya (Jennifer Hudson) and her daughter Zora (Quvenzhané Wallis) cling to life underground, their breaths measured by precious oxygen. Maya's late husband, Darius, designs a state-of-the-art oxygen suit that allows them brief forays to the surface. When a mysterious couple claims knowledge of Darius's fate, Maya faces a perilous decision: trust them or

fight for survival.

Breathe explores themes of sacrifice, trust, and the lengths we'll go to protect our loved ones. The film's emotional arcs, while disjointed at times, resonate with the audience. The dilemma faced by Maya and Zora, whether to open their sanctuary to strangers, creates palpable tension.

Despite its flaws, *Breathe* leaves an indelible mark. It's a reminder of our fragile existence and the choices we make when survival hangs in the balance. While not a masterpiece, it's a breath of fresh air in the sci-fi thriller genre.



Caught in a deluge after driving down to Mombasa

BY MIKE SAFARA

The Bolt car that my late Aunt Cecilia had leased out as a Bolt was a black Suzuki Wagon, 2014 model; and the one that was being used as an Uber, a sleek purple Mazda Carol (2018).

"I think we can get at least 600K for the Suzuki," Safari said, "and 700K for the Mazda. What do you think, Mike?"

"I think after paying mall tycoon Li his one million for our share of 'Safara Mascara', we ought to split the 300K on top fifty-fifty," I said.

That got my cousin Safari laughing, and I joined him in the laughter, marvelling at how genes worked. Our fathers, the Safaras, are brothers.

And here we were, one generation down, with similar broad brow features, big square jaws, and the same brown eyes — down to the teeth.

"Spoken to Li lately?" my cousin asked me.

"He had to fly back to Guangdong yesterday," I told him. "There was a tornado in Guangzhou, and guess he's gone to check if all his extended family is safe."

"But mostly," Safari said, "to *bling back cheap goodies fur Guan Dough More*."

That set us off merrily chuckling again, Safo and I.

No sooner had Safari put up the car pictures on one of the Mombasa-centric advert websites than there was an immediate reply from a Mark Mutua of the Ports Authority, asking us to drive the vehicles down.

"Are you sure this guy is on the level, Safo?"

"How would I know?" Safari shrugged. "I know you once got bitten, but there's no need to be shy about this deal..."

"I'm not shy, just suspicious," I told Safo. "And I am sure that's not how the saying goes, senior man."

That night, I dreamt we were driving with Safari in the Suzuki into

the warehouse where I had been robbed of 90K last October.

Men in flowing black robes materialised out of the woodwork with guns in hand to rob us. As I jumped out of the car and fled, I heard a gunshot as they shot Safo — and woke up shouting into the night.

In spite of my premonition, I didn't say a word about the dream to a cheerful Safari as he jumped into the Suzuki (he was a fast driver) and me into the Mazda.

He honked his horn, leaned out of the window, yelled: "Here we come, Mombasa."

It was an uneventful trip that took us just six hours, from 7 am to 1 pm.

Our potential car buyer, Mutua, turned out to be having lunch at the Severin Sea resort, a serene place with a seaside restaurant and an efficiently professional manager, Mr Tuva, who welcomed us, and led us straight to where Mutua was sitting.

Mark Mutua turned out to be an amiable fellow, with a pleasant

brown round smiling face, and as we enjoyed a delicious lunch of seafood, the hotel proprietor, a handsome young German called Sebastian, passed by to ask if all was well.

It was, except that Mutua turned out to be a pretty rigid bargainer, who basically offered us a million bob for both cars, and in hard cash, if we did the car deal right away.

"You mean you sign and go to the bank for the funds right now, man?" Safo asked.

Mutua grinned and opened the duffle bag at his sandalled feet, and pulled out transfer forms. "*Weka kidole*," he said, "and walk away with this *mfuko* right now."

He opened the bag wider, and with round eyes, I saw wads of cash wrapped with rubber bands.

"*Hiyo ni milioni moja*," Mutua said, "*ama laki moja*. Sign, and n-go!"

Safo leaned over to me and whispered: "*Cuzo*, go to the loo and count the cash. If it's a *mita*, text me and we wrap this *shiznit* up, my homie."

It was odd sitting on a toilet seat in an air-refreshed lavatory of the Severin, door firmly bolted, counting out a million bob in one thousand notes.

When I emerged from the bathroom, from what must have seemed like the longest long call ever north of the Limpopo, a sudden thought overtook me.

"What if the money is fake?" Going back to the loo, I randomly picked out 50K from the duffle bag, from separate bundles, and went to the reception to get it verified by their money machine.

"It's fine, sir," a sweet smiling Swahili receptionist assured me.

There was only one thing left to do to close the deal — Mark Mutua wanted us to drive back either one of the cars to his wife in Nairobi, "*hand hi will come with the other one when ham done with *mbi-ashara* here *hinn ha day* or two..."*

It was 3pm by the time we left Mombasa, Safari on the wheel of the Mazda.

There was a drizzle that had turned into a steady downpour by the time we got to Mariakani, then a roaring deluge an hour later as we crawled in the Carol past Samburu.

"I can hardly see the road in front of me, Mike," Safari said, stating the obvious even as the wipers whacked furiously away at the rain. "Think we will have to sleep in Voi?"

"In the style of kings," I said, trying to sound light, as I threw an eye at the light blue duffle bag in the back seat, as I had nervously been doing since Mombasa — as if it was a magic bag of money and could disappear back to Mutua (after all, he had mentioned he was originally from Kitui), leaving our hustle high and dry.

Suddenly, as we got to that road dip in Maungu, a sudden flood of water came roaring at our Mazda out of the hills, and I felt the wheels of the car turn into rubber paddles.

"Mike," Safari screamed. "We are being swept away!"

Reflexively, I climbed into the back seat, grabbed the duffle bag, and strung it like a noose around my neck and chest. Instinctively, I shoved open the back door of the car, and with muscle memory, swam away from the Mazda Carol, 2018 model.

Only when I was panting away, wet on high ground, the rain pouring down with fury did I realise, as in a terrible dream, that my cousin Safo, buckled into his seat, had been swept away with the car.

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Stephen Khakhula,
28, youth leader

Sport has been known to be the most unifying tool for peace in the world. It's been idealised as a way to heal wounds, mend fences, and rise above differences among cultures and nations.

It is because of this that I'm passionately involved in using sport to bring peace in our neighbourhoods, particularly amongst youth whose communities have been involved in bloody conflicts since the first-ever post-election violence in Kenya in 1992.

Sport is bridging the gap between rival gang members who have caused mayhem and forced residents to live in fear.

It is through sport that youth have a genuine one-on-one with their peers and counsellors and open up on how they are intensively recruited or coerced into gangs.

The majority of the youth seemingly have no choice. A few are virtually born into gangs but as a youth, I'm determined to win their souls so that they can be converted through sport.

Through sport, gang membership has steadily dropped and this has translated in the level of social integration in the neighbourhoods which was previously low.

The high levels of neighbourhood disorganisation and high levels of violence and gang membership has also dropped, thanks to the

Game Project.

I have witnessed first-hand post-election violence. Daily, I am saddened by the war drums that are beating as the countdown to the 2027 General Election runs.

Many of the youth are still healing and when I see some of the tormentors preaching peace through sport and embracing each other, I feel there will be hope of peace in the next polls.

Sport is very important in advancing peace and social cohesion agenda.

Sports has continuously bridged the political divide and animosity that has existed in this country since the 1992 post-poll clashes.

As a youth, I have learnt many other important issues affecting us, like drugs and substance abuse, mental health and social wellness.

I know that through youth-led sporting activities, it is easy to convince those still indulging in the crime to change.

The Game Project shines a light on the benefits of youth spending a great deal of their time in their favourite sports, where one of the key aims is to increase access to sports opportunities and bring the health and societal benefits of physical activity to communities in all corners of the country.

We're witnesses to the unifying power of sport

Sport holds the key to peace, and youth are tapping into its power to bring adversaries together. In Nakuru, young people have signed for a sporting project and are witnessing change. We interviewed some of them

BY FRANCIS MUREITHI

For a long time, youth have been mischievously used by politicians as peace ambassadors through hurriedly arranged tournaments. These seem to be sports-related events but they are not. Each one of them is turned into a political event.

Politicians use the youth as pawns to help them get elected, run campaigns and even to settle scores.

That is changing in Nakuru, thanks to an initiative dubbed the Game Project.

The project taps into the power of sports to bring social cohesion while embracing diversity, and inclusivity and advocating for good governance

It has brought together more than 300 youths from the Nakuru political hotbeds, including Nakuru Town East and Nakuru Town West.

The youth are involved in football and basketball and the organisers plan to introduce other sports like volleyball, athletics, and netball.

Matches are not played in a league format because organisers don't want this to be sports for competition but for development.

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Teresa Abel,
26, Research officer



Sport has a huge power to change Nakuru County's political equation and Kenya at large as it is a powerful tool to strengthen social ties, sustainable development and peace, as well as solidarity and respect for all.

Marginalised groups like women and children are no longer bystanders as they, too, are participating in sport and through this participation, the society respects and recognises their roles in

the community.

In an open competition, sport reduces the stigma and discrimination often associated with disability by highlighting ability and talent, thereby transforming public attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

At the same time, sport – being a universally popular pursuit and given the physical, social and economic developmental benefits associated with it – is an ideal tool to foster the inclusion and

wellbeing of persons with disabilities.

Through the Game Project, youth have been able to promote peace and cohesion in Nakuru Town East and West constituencies.

The project is using sport to unite individuals and groups by participating in events at the grassroots level, and developing peace-related campaigns and initiatives.

Besides promoting peace, sport can empower women and girls, young people, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups to advance health, sustainability, and education objectives.

It can also serve as a vehicle to promote climate action, gender equality, and the fight against tribalism and hate speech during and after the General Election.

Sport is a mobilisation tool that has proved effective in bringing non-participant youth and other members of the communities together for a national dialogue.

In addition, I reflect on the political significance of sports in the development of local policy.

Sports mobilises the youth around the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) and hence they will have a big say in development matters.

Being a five-year plan, the CIDP also comes in handy when developing a county's long-term strategic plan that affects their welfare of the youth like sporting facilities and equipment as their voices and priorities will be captured.



Hannington Nick Omollo, 28, Volunteer – Tribeless

Sport builds friendship, peace and social cohesion. It has proven to be a cost-effective and flexible tool in promoting peace and development objectives in Kenya and that is why I'm so passionate to join my colleagues to preach the gospel of peace in Nakuru and beyond.

As a youth, I strongly believe sport can align our passion, energy and enthusiasm around a collective cause.

As a young person living in Nakuru County and having witnessed violence, I need to amplify peace and one of the ways I can do that is to participate in sporting activities to promote peace which, as youth, we must be prepared to guard jealously as we head to 2027.

This country must remain peaceful. No more bloodshed. I will continue to support sport among the youth for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

About 80 per cent of the youth are involved in at least one sport. I believe that sport helps the youth learn about discipline and dedication, as well as how to get along with others.

Youth who are actively involved in sport are less likely to get involved with drugs, to get pregnant and are three times more likely to graduate if they are in school or college.

Sport creates a great outcome for society. It is disheartening to see the two levels of government set a negligible amount of money on sports.

I appreciate what a significant contribution sport has made to my life, communities and individual lives as well.

Sport plays an important role in the lives of young adults and their participation is a sure bet in guidance in shaping the next generation.

As a youth deeply involved in the Game Project in the slums, I do so much more than just teach technique or sports tactics to my colleagues.

Sport is a vehicle to teach young people some great skills so they can become successful contributors to society.

Sport helps youths to become better contributors to society. Research shows that young people's involvement in sport helps them improve their social interaction, increase their confidence, and improve their listening skills and health. Participation in sport is linked to higher grades, a lower dropout rate, reduced truancy and lower crime rates.

Sport can make Kenya a better place by ending generational political differences that have put communities on the edge. Sport keeps youths' minds and bodies strong and healthy.

The two levels of the government should show their commitment to ensuring the interests of the youth are taken care of and that there is peace and cohesion in Kenya.

Sport can make Kenya a better place by ending generational political differences that have put communities on the edge.

Hannington Nick Omollo



Brenda Seki, 24, psychology graduate

Even mama mbogas are coming out to describe how they are enjoying a lot of peace as the young people are no longer engaged in violence.

Brenda Seki



Sport inspires the youth to always give it their best. It makes them dream, it spreads joy and it brings them together. I'm involved in the Game Project because it highlights the positive impacts sports have on both physical and mental health.

I want to inspire the youth to move more every day as sports have been proven to be tools for healthy bodies, minds and resilient communities.

Sport plays a key role in social progress and is also an important enabler of sustainable development and peace that is currently being enjoyed in Nakuru County and the entire country at large.

I have witnessed sport play a huge role in peace promotion, tolerance and respect through the Game Project which is a sporting activity amongst the youths in Nakuru County.

I have also seen sport make huge contributions to the empowerment of women and young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.

Through the Game Project, two rival gangs in Nakuru popularly known as "Confirm" have come together and formed football teams and worked together.

They are now working together like a family and in some of the areas the gang violence has gone down and even *mama mbogas* are coming out to describe how they are enjoying a lot of peace as the young people are no longer engaged in violence.

My major worry is that the youth face many challenges, including the lack of sporting equipment and facilities.

This is because the number of youth embracing peace initiatives through sport for development through the Game Project is increasing.

My interest in this Game Project is to be part of the collective interest to harness the tremendous power of sport to help build a better and more sustainable future for all.

I'm excited that some of the youth are using sports to share best practices, discuss challenges, and explore collaborative opportunities to drive positive social change and contribute to efforts to bring peace in the densely populated slums.

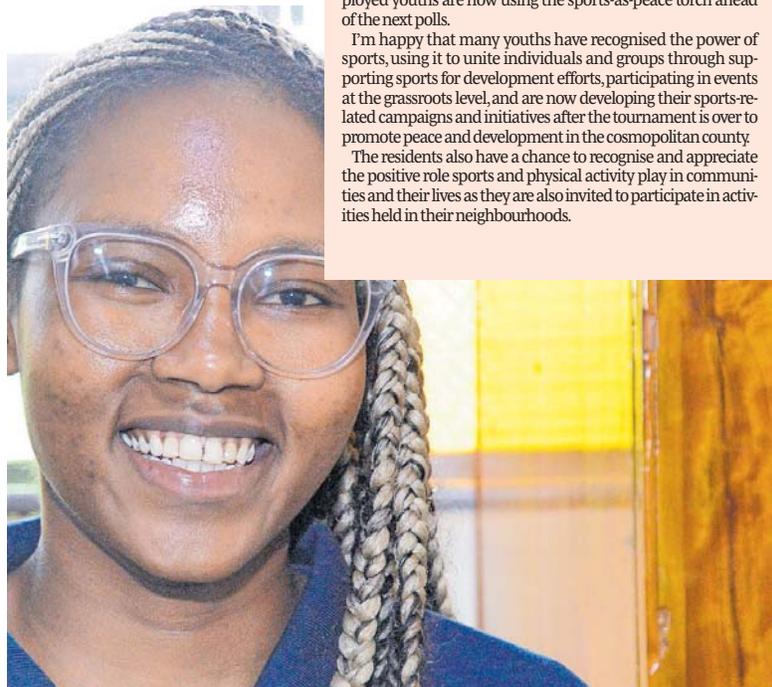
These sporting activities among the youth are a symbol of hope ahead of the 2027 General Election.

Youth in the slums have been witnessing deadly clashes every election cycle followed by violent extremism that spread social instability, posing significant security risks in the slums.

The beauty of youth-led sports is that some of the unemployed youths are now using the sports-as-peace torch ahead of the next polls.

I'm happy that many youths have recognised the power of sports, using it to unite individuals and groups through supporting sports for development efforts, participating in events at the grassroots level, and are now developing their sports-related campaigns and initiatives after the tournament is over to promote peace and development in the cosmopolitan county.

The residents also have a chance to recognise and appreciate the positive role sports and physical activity play in communities and their lives as they are also invited to participate in activities held in their neighbourhoods.



Legacy The midfielder's late father was a footballer and later a coach

BY TOTO AREGE

Sunira Were, a highly skilled midfielder, is presently a Form Three student at Moi Girls High School in Eldoret.

It is worth noting that she secured the MVP (most valuable player) title in both last year's Safaricom Chapa Dimba (Uasin Gishu County) and the Talanta Hela county tournament.

Moreover, the 17-year-old was part of the Talanta Hela team that travelled to Barcelona, Spain, for a two-week training camp last month.

Sunira is part of a pioneering group of young Muslim female footballers proudly wearing hijabs during matches.

Her talent transcends the football pitch. She is also excellent in academics, and this led to her appointment as the school captain.

Share your football journey with us.

I come from the quaint town of Mumias in the Western region of Kenya. I am the youngest of five siblings — a brother and four sisters.

My formative years were spent in Mumias, attending Mumias DEB for primary school before proceeding to Moi Girls High School, Eldoret, for my secondary education after performing exceptionally well in my Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examinations with 412/500 marks.

Football has been an integral part of my life since Standard One, but it wasn't until Standard Three that it truly became a profound passion of mine.

Sports did not play a significant role in my family dynamics, except for my late father. He tragically passed away when I was just six months old, but he was the only family member who harboured a love for football.

My mother cherishes his memories and the impact he had on the community through his involvement in football.

Post his playing career, he established and coached a team called Kiboko FC. Though the team is no longer active, his dedication to the sport remains a treasured part of our family legacy.

I am grateful for the opportunity to join Moi Girls, a school that fosters talent and education, unveiling new prospects for me as an emerging player.

You are one of the few local players who play in a hijab. Have you encountered any challenges?

At some point in one football match, I was asked by the referee to remove my hijab, stretchers and stockings or go out of the pitch because they did not match the match day uniform.

I decided to walk away, but not until my coaches, Joseph Nzioki and Robert Simiyu, intervened. I was allowed to play. In everything I do, I put God first, and He has made everything possible for me.

I am showcasing that wearing

Q&A



Sunira Were (centre), of Moi Girls High School in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, during training in Eldoret on April 27. She is on the school's football team. JARED NYATAYA | NATION

Sunira: A star in class, an MVP on the pitch — all in a hijab

a hijab does not impede playing football professionally, even after encountering obstacles in the past for not having a hijab that aligned with the team's colours.

As a Muslim, I adhere to the teachings of the Koran and serve as a role model for young Muslim girls who may have felt discouraged from playing football due to our religion.

How do you manage playing and fasting during the Holy Month of Ramadhan?

At times, it can be challenging, especially at school when we have two training sessions a day and multiple matches in a single day during school games or competitions.

Some Muslims may struggle to play football during Ramadhan and may choose not to partici-

pate.

Fasting Muslims do not expect others to refrain from eating or drinking, but it is courteous to avoid doing so in their presence.

During this month-long period, Muslim faithful fast from dawn until sunset, refraining from both food and drink.

For sportspeople, this can be a challenge as they must sustain their energy levels and performance during training and matches.

Nutrition and hydration play vital roles in engaging in physical activities, which is why fasting can have an impact.

However, this does not mean that the Muslim community ceases to engage in sports and exercise throughout Ramadhan.

Sunira Were (right), of Moi Girls High School in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, and plays for the school's football team, during training in Eldoret on April 27. JARED NYATAYA | Nation.



Did you ever dream of playing for the national team?

Despite my involvement in primary school games, my school never managed to progress beyond the regional levels. This left me feeling anxious about the possibility of playing at a higher level or even representing my country in the future.

The dream I had finally became a reality earlier this year during the under-20 World Cup qualifier match against Cameroon. Coach Beldine Odemba of the Rising Starlets selected me to be part of the final squad. It was truly unbelievable.

Throughout both the away and home games, I remained on the bench without any playing time. Unfortunately, we were knocked out of the competition at home.

However, I hold onto the belief that my opportunity will eventually arrive. Dreams remain valid, and I will continue to nurture them.

You recently travelled to Spain with the Talanta Hela team. How was the experience?

The Talanta Initiative provided me with a platform to explore the world.

It was truly a dream-come-true. My family has been a significant source of motivation for me in my young career, especially my supportive mother.

We faced formidable teams and talented players in Europe, which is crucial for the development of our game in the country.

Initiatives like these are essential for showcasing the talents of grassroots players on an international stage. I've learnt the importance of perseverance.

How do you manage to balance your studies with football?

It's all about setting goals and planning diligently. I structure my day carefully, balancing training at 4pm with regular classes.

I make sure to allocate time for studying to stay on track with my classmates even during training sessions.

Football and education go hand-in-hand. I recognise that after my playing days, I'll need to work to support myself.

Considering how European countries have nurtured women's football, what steps should be taken in our country?

Talented kids should be trained as early as possible, an area where European countries have surpassed us. We need modern facilities for training and to engage in high-profile friendlies in order to help grow our game.

Who is your role model?

Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne. I admire his precision in passing and decision-making abilities, as well as his ambidextrous skills.

I am a proud City fan as far as the English Premier League is concerned.

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