

ON THE INSIDE



Collective dream The WAFA players hope their success will catch the eye of the national team coach.

Surprise package WAFA have embarked on an impressive run of form since February.

Ghana: Premier League

Football academy making waves



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After a fortnight's break the second half of the Ghanaian Premier League season gets underway this weekend, and the fixture list is crammed with so many midweek games it makes the match schedule in some of Europe's top leagues look straightforward by comparison. The reason the calendar is so congested was a rights dispute that forced the Ghanaian Football Association (GFA) to postpone the start of the season from September to January. Relegated outfit King Faisal Babes had obtained a temporary injunction after arguing that a direct rival should have been deducted points for late payment of a fine. Eventually a court ruling declared the injunction void.

The four-month delay has not had an adverse effect on promoted side and surprise package West African Football Academy Sporting Club (WAFA), who are second in the standings having earned 25 points from 15 games in the fiercely contested league. WAFA started the campaign slowly but have embarked on an impressive run of form since February.

WAFA began as a football academy founded by Dutch club Feyenoord in 1999 with the aim of providing talented youngsters in West Africa with football training and an academic education. Prior to the new season the club, which had hitherto been known as Feyenoord Academy and based in the town of Gomoa-Fetteh, changed its name and moved to Sogakope, near the capital city of Accra.

Their new base, a complex with five artificial pitches, a weights room, a library and modern sleeping quarters for up to 80 students, is unrivalled in Ghana and has evidently aided the development of the young team led by captain Joseph Amoah.

Yet for the club's Dutch coach John Killa, the success has come as no surprise: "My players are very motivated because they dream of playing in the national team." That is no mere pipe dream either, as proven by academy graduates Christian Atsu, now at Everton, and Harrison Afful, at Esperance Tunis, both of whom were in Ghana's Black Stars squad at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil and this year's Africa Cup of Nations in Equatorial Guinea. ❄️