

African stars opting out of Afcon are 'selfish and egotistical'

BBC Sport reports that the chairman of the Local Organising Committee for the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) says players who will not play for their country are "selfish and egotistical".



Chief Mwelo Nonkonyana, who is also a vice president of the South Africa Football Association (Safa), said that it cannot be right for "any player produced [in Africa] to say 'I prefer my club'."

Afcon takes place between 19 January and 10 February and two stars who will miss the Cup of Nations are Real Madrid's Ghanaian Michael Essien, who has asked to be excused, and Everton's South African Steven Pienaar, who has retired from internationals. "It is time for all of us football administrators across the world to fight and uproot this scourge, this club versus country issue," Nonkonyana said.

He added that players should be proud of their nation of birth. Essien and Pienaar are "megastars now as a direct result of the contribution of their national associations." Nonkonyana told BBC Sport Steven Pienaar should remember that "he came from the ghettos in South Africa and he became a national player because the South African FA identified him and developed him to be where he was."

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