

# Super Eagles of Nigeria are new African champions

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11 Feb 2013

JOHANNESBURG: The Super Eagles of Nigeria are the new African champions after they beat Burkina Faso 1-nil in a pulsating final match of the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) at National Stadium on Sunday night, 10 February 2013.



The Super Eagles first won the Afcon title in 1980 and again in 1994 with a team captained by their current head coach, Stephen Keshi. They finished in third place in the 2002, 2004, 2006 and the 2010 Afcon tournaments.

The new Afcon champions took home the coveted trophy and cash prize of US\$1.5 million. However, Burkina Faso wrapped up the continental tourney with their heads held high as it was the first time they reached the Afcon finals.

In the sixth minute, Florent Rouamba brought down Brown Ideye outside the box. Victor Moses took the set-piece but Efe Ambrose's header missed the target.

The Burkinabes should have been punished when Mady Panandetiguiri stopped running, thinking that the ball went out of play on the right flank, but instead Moses ran behind him and made a cross which was blocked by Keba Koulibaly, giving away a corner-kick.

Dauoda Diakite raced out of his line to catch the ball, but he missed it and an unmarked Ideye squandered the goal scoring opportunity to put his country in the lead.

As the Nigerians continued to run the match, Koulibaly tried to stop the Super Eagles combination with a poor heel which ended up on Ideye, but again the Nigerians failed to punish their fellow West Africans.

Rouamba got a yellow card for a robust challenge on Moses in the 31st minute, while Ogenyi Onazi was cautioned in the 38th minute.

The Super Eagles scored their first goal in the 39th minute after a superb interconnection between Moses and Ikechukwu

Uche towards the box and connected with Sunday Mba, who curled it into the bottom right corner.

However, Burkina Faso nearly equalised a minute later, but Aristede Bance unleashed a shot straight into the stands.

As a result, the Nigerians went to half-time still leading 1-0. In the second half, the Super Eagles continued with their offensive attack when pacey Moses connected well with Ideye in the box.

Instead of playing a back pass to his teammates who were waiting for the ball in the box, Ideye fired a shot, which passed in front of the goal-line, much to the disappointment of the Nigerian fans.

Sensational Burkinabe player Jonathan Pitriopa stopped the Nigerians from attacking with his dribbling skills, but his efforts were fruitless as his teammates in the front never troubled Nigerian goalie Vincent Enyeama.

However, in the 74th minute, Prejuce Nakoulma forced him to make a finger-tip save with his grass-cutter shot that he unleashed 30 metres from the box.

With 10 minutes to go, Koulibaly fouled Ideye on the edge of the box, but Obi Mikel disappointed his volley which never troubled Diakite.

As Burkina Faso failed to test Nigeria to force the match into extra time, the Super Eagles continued to hold their 1-0 lead until the Algerian referee blew the final whistle.

Burkina Faso reached their first ever final after beating Ghana 3-2 on penalties in a gripping semi-final match marked by poor refereeing, while Nigeria defeated their fellow West Africans, Mali 4-1 to reach the finals.

**Burkina Faso XI:** Diakite Dauoda, Kone Bakary, Koffi Mohamed, Kone Djakaridja, Rouamba Florent, Koulibaly Keba, Jonathan Pitriopa, Panandetiguri Mady, Aristede Bance, Charles Kabore (captain) and Prejuce Nakoulma.

**Nigeria XI:** Vincent Enyeama (captain), Elderson Echiejile, Efe Ambrose, Brown Ideye, John Obi Mikel, Victor Moses, Oboabona Godfrey, Uche Ikechukwu, Onazi Ogenyi, Mba Sunday and Omeruo Kenneth.