Issue No.1

SPORTSBIZ AFRICA

SPORTSBIZ AFRICA NEWSLETTER 2026

Visit Rwanda made history at UEFA, but the Branding Feat is Africa's

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Jurrien Timber,
Arsenal player (Photo by Jack Thomas/ GettyImages)
Source: Just Arsenal

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WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE SPORTSBIZ AFRICA NEWSLETTER

The SportsBiz Africa Forum has emerged as an important platform advancing the business of sport as a driver of socio-economic transformation across the continent. As we look ahead to the 2026 SBA Forum this September in Kigali, we build on a growing movement dedicated to elevating Africa as a competitive and coordinated global sports market.

This inaugural newsletter responds to a clear need, as Africa's sports industry is expanding rapidly yet remains fragmented, under-capitalised, and insufficiently connected across policy, investment, and enterprise. The newsletter will provide a vehicle to bridge these gaps, offering insight, aligning stakeholders, and elevating sport within national and continental development agendas. It is designed to inform decisions, connect stakeholders, and mobilise investment.

In this issue, we reflect on the Rabat launch of SBA 2026 alongside AFCON, signalling the Forum's rising continental and global relevance. We revisit the milestones of 2025, from high-level policy dialogue and investment deal-making to talent development, esports, and golf, and how we aim to scale further. We examine Rwanda's Visit Rwanda breakthrough at UEFA as a branding benchmark for Africa to own, and unpack the economic case for Kigali's sports infrastructure as a bellwether for Africa's sustainable development. We also spotlight emerging talent in the example of a young sports lawyer, preview the expanded SportsBiz Africa Golf Championship, and explore the data foretelling a happier future for Africa's youth.

We also welcome you to join us at the 2026 SportsBiz Africa Forum this September in Kigali.

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About SportsBiz Africa Forum

The SportsBiz Africa Policymakers and Stakeholders Roundtable is a pan-African platform convening government ministers, private sector leaders, multilateral institutions, and civil society to deliberate on actionable and sustainable sports policy solutions. It aims to enable the continent's socio-economic growth through sports, in alignment with the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063. Inaugurated in 2024, the roundtable is a collaborative partnership between the African Union Sports Council (AUSC), Rwanda's Ministry of Sports and SportsBiz Africa.

In addition to the Forum's plenary, which features panel discussions, the SBA component programmes include the following:

- Policymakers and Stakeholders Roundtable Investors Dealroom
- SportsBiz Africa Golf Championship SBA Esports Cup
- Talent Incubation and Professional Development Programme
- SBA Connect Programme SportsBiz Africa Forum Exhibition

All Set for SBA 2026 This September After Successful Launch in Rabat, Morocco

The TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations in Rabat, Morocco, provided the backdrop for the launch of the 2026 SportsBiz Africa Forum. Capitalising on the global attention surrounding AFCON, the invitation-only breakfast event convened senior policymakers and other prominent stakeholders to formally unveil the forum's agenda and strategic direction. Among the organisations represented were the African Union Sports Council and FIFA. **Read more.**

"The TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations in Rabat, Morocco, provided the backdrop for the launch of the 2026 SportsBiz Africa Forum."

The Achievements SBA 2026 Aims to Build Upon This September

The SportsBiz Africa Forum broke new ground in its second edition when it introduced a range of complementary segments, placing the forum among the most impactful industry development platforms in Africa. 2026 will return with them even bigger and more impactful. **Read more**

SBA 2025 in Numbers

PLENARY AND PANELS

600+ Participants

40+ Panellists

30+ Countries

POLICYMAKERS ROUNDTABLE

15 African ministers and government leaders

25 Countries

GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

105 professional and amateur players

12 Countries

30+ Countries

ESPORTS CUP

8 African countries

DEALROOM

100+ startup entries

4 finalists linked with investor

TALENT & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

25 young African professional graduates

Visit Rwanda Made History at UEFA, But the Branding Feat Is Africa's

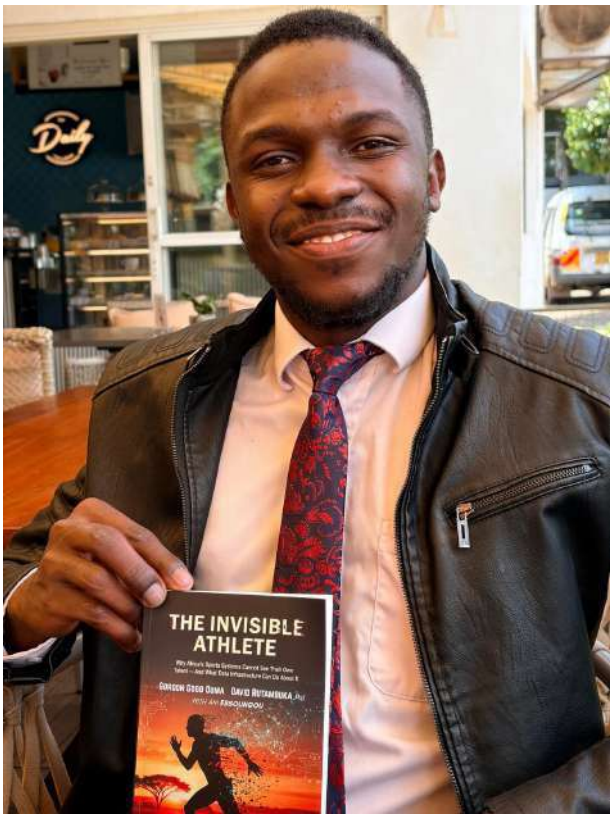
April 2026 will be a moment to remember for Rwanda and its teeming soccer fans for a very long time. Four of its high-profile partners, Arsenal FC, Paris Saint-Germain, Bayern Munich, and Atlético de Madrid, all reached the semi-finals of the 2025–26 UEFA Champions League. It is a big score for the country's marketing. With two of the four teams guaranteed a place in the final, the 'Visit Rwanda' brand is set to appear on one of the most-watched stages in global sport. The significance lies in unprecedented brand visibility. The UEFA Champions League commands a cumulative global audience in the hundreds of millions. Every match featuring these clubs has amplified Rwanda's presence across Europe, Asia, and the Americas – a record that will endure, and that the country will always be associated long after the tournament. **Read more**

So Many Medals!

The joke at the SportsBiz Africa Forum 2025 was that never before had so many medals been gathered at a conference. Armand Carlos Netsing Takam (far right), the Cameroonian-French heavyweight boxer, displays his WBC and IBF belts. Next to him, French judoka Clarisse Agbégnénou (second right) boasts six World Judo Championship titles and two Olympic gold medals. Former Nigerian international footballer Austin 'Jay-Jay' Okocha (second left) took an Olympic Gold medal (1996), Africa Cup of Nations title (1994), two BBC African Footballer of the Year awards and a League Cup runner-up medal with Bolton. Completing the group are Serge Doh (far left), President of the Ivorian Athletics Federation, and Assane Thiam (centre), a Senegalese international football agent.

The Economic Case for Kigali Sports City How 1,008 days of data prove impact

The SBA Policymakers and Stakeholders Roundtable is already preparing for its third edition this September. It finds a raging debate in Kigali with some lamenting the economic value of the capital's 'sports city', which comprises the national Amahoro Stadium, BK Arena and Zaria court. A commentary in this issue looks at the facts and describes how one of the most riveting presentations at the roundtable showed the economic impact generated in 1,008 days leading to last year's forum. It also highlights how enlightened sports policy may not always be visible, despite effective implementation, and aims to raise public awareness as Rwanda continues to invest in the sector.
Read more.



Meet Gordon Gogo, SBA Management Training Programme Alumnus

The SportsBiz Africa incubation and sports management training programme continues to equip young African professionals with knowledge and skills in sports and financial management. As we prepare for the next cohort of youth to attend this year's programme, we profile Gordon Gogo, a sports lawyer who graduated in 2025, and whose student project, Mchezaji App, emerged among the top three. He has since published a book borne of the idea that birthed Mchezaji. **Read about it here.**

"As we prepare for the next cohort of youth to attend this year's programme, we profile a Former Student."

SportsBiz Africa Golf Championship Returns to Kigali for an Even Bigger Second Edition

The championship, part of the Sunshine Development Tour – East Africa Swing, is set to return on a larger scale, reinforcing Rwanda's growing status as an emerging hub for competitive golf in Africa. Over 150 professional and amateur players are expected from Africa and beyond. They will include Rwanda's international pro Celestin Nsazuwera, who won the inaugural tournament in 2025. **Read more.**

Africa's Youth in Numbers and the Happy Future they Predict

When youth are spoken about in Africa, it is often with a sense of alarm pointing to their bulging numbers and unemployment. There is a more positive view: Their numbers can be shown to be fascinating; that many of them are in employment; and that, for the rest, the future looks brighter than many might expect. **Read more.**

ANNOUNCEMENT

Attention Rwanda Gamers!

Would you like to represent Rwanda at the SBA Esports Cup?

Preparations are in high gear for the second SportsBiz Africa Esports Cup. The inaugural 2025 edition brought together professional gamers from eight African countries, including Rwanda, which was represented by Praise. The tournament was won by South Africa's Zaid April.
In preparation for the forthcoming SBA Esports Cup, SportsBiz Africa is planning a national qualifying tournament to determine who will represent Rwanda on the international stage.
If you would like to participate as a gamer, we will be announcing registration dates soon. Stay tuned! Read more.

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